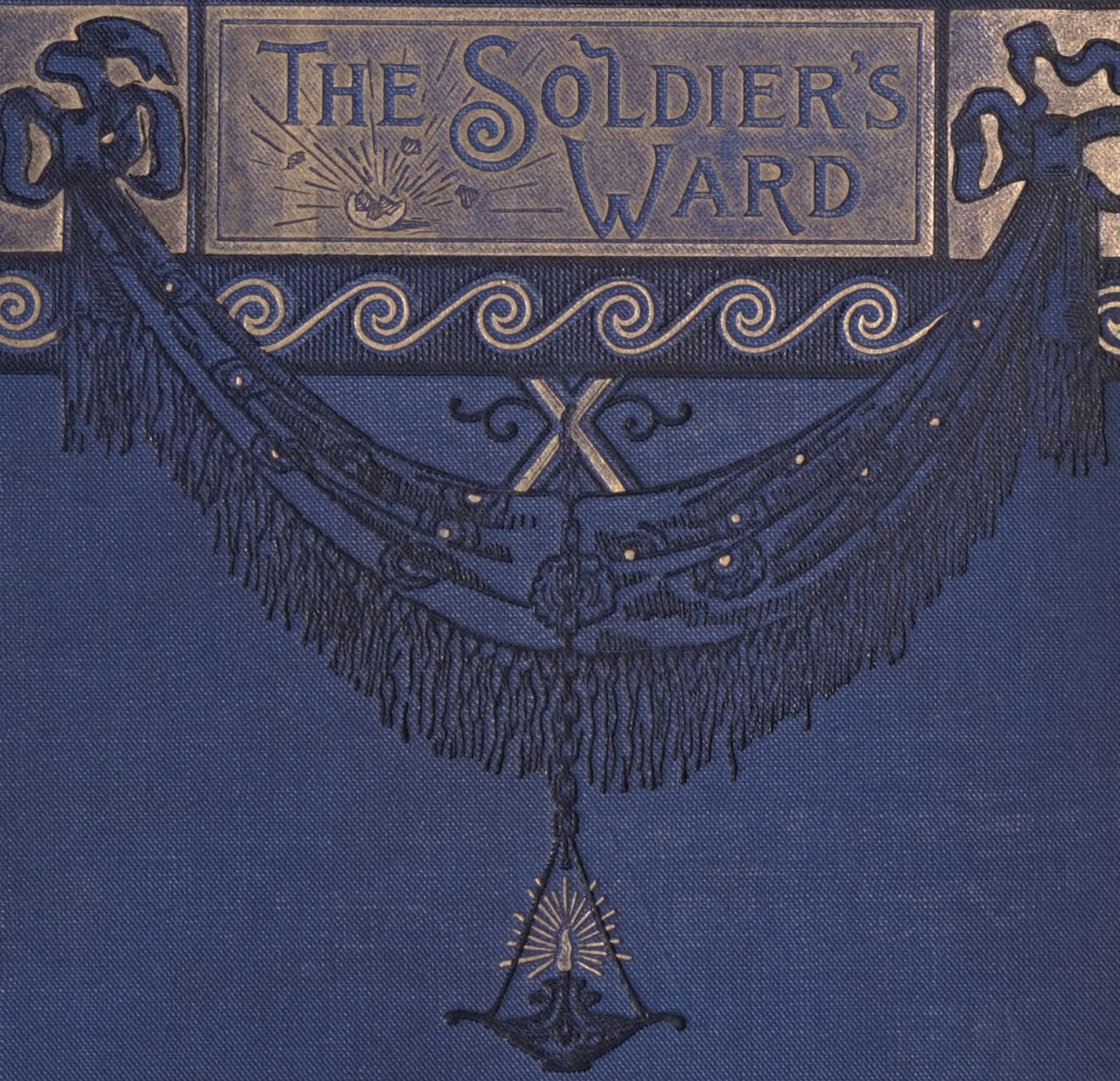




THE SOLDIER'S
WARD



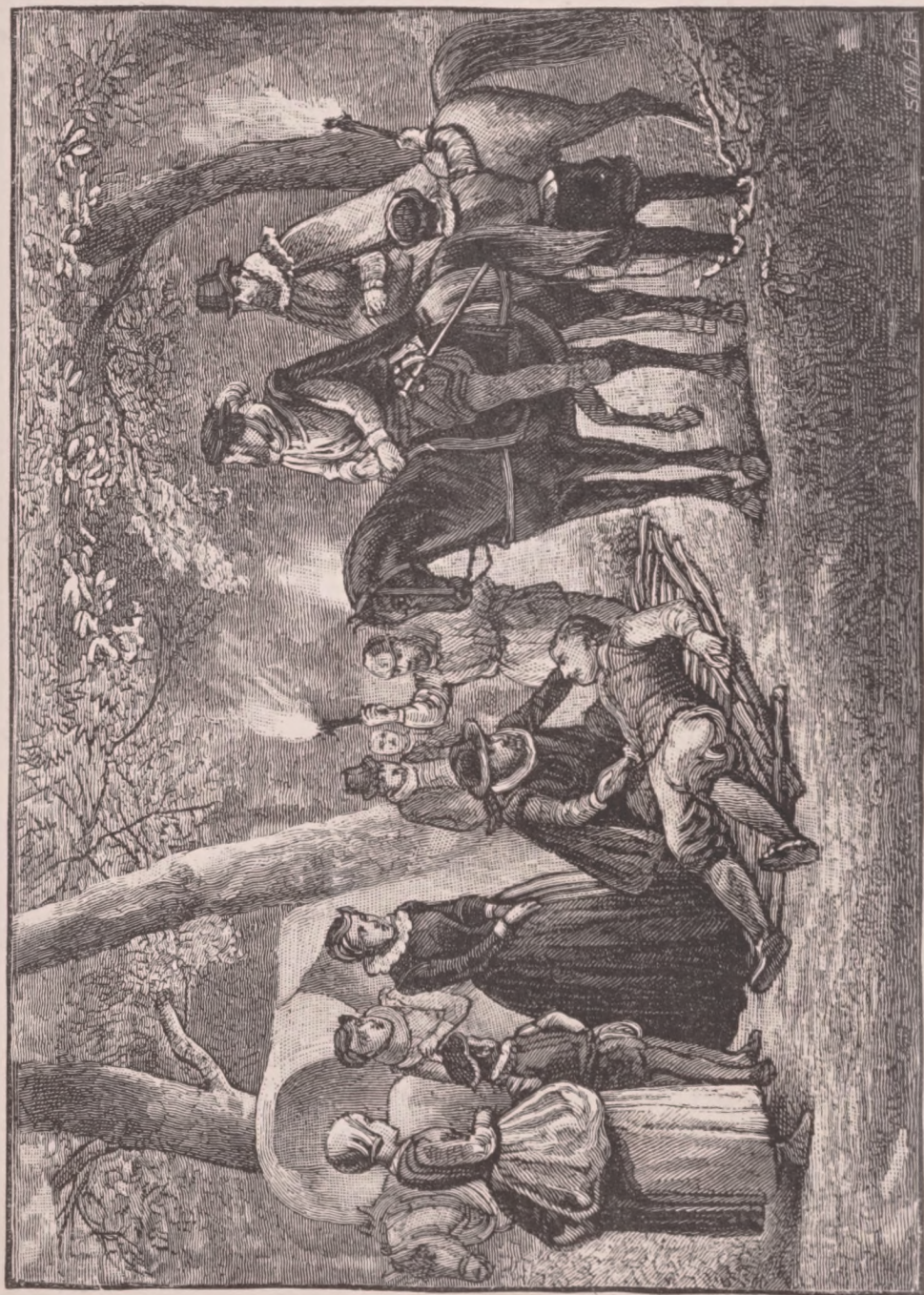
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THE
SOLDIER'S WARD;
OR,
SAVED FOR MARTYRDOM.

A SEQUEL TO "WALTER HARMSSEN."

BY
E. GERDES.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH (WITH CHANGES
AND ADDITIONS)*

35
BY
REV. DANIEL VAN PELT.



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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
A DEALER IN FINE LINEN	15

CHAPTER II.

THE SOLDIER'S WARD	25
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A LIVING MAN-TRAP	35
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP MARNIX OF ST. ALDEGONDE	45
--	----

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT MAN AT HOME	55
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE STEWARD'S PAYMENT	62
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
THE RING AND THE GIRDLE	70

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEALER IN FINE LINEN EXPLAINS HIMSELF . . .	79
---	----

CHAPTER IX.

THE CABIN IN THE SANDHILLS	91
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER X.

A LETTER FROM ABROAD	103
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE SIEGE OF STEENWYK	114
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERIOUS REMINDER ONCE MORE	122
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

BEARDING THE STEWARD IN HIS DEN	132
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OMINOUS WORDS	141
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE	152
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

	PAGE
THE MYSTERY UNFOLDED	163

CHAPTER XVII.

A RIDE THROUGH THE FOREST	176
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHERIFF AND HIS PRISONERS	187
---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF THE WICKED	196
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT	206
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

ESCAPED FROM THE INQUISITION	220
--	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

THE JESUIT AND HIS TOOLS	229
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

PREPARING THE SNARE	240
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT	250
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

	PAGE
A MOTHER'S LETTER	263

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MIDNIGHT APPOINTMENT	276
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

DIAMOND CUTTING DIAMOND	286
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE APOTHECARY OUTWITTED	297
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PRISON OF THE INQUISITION	303
---	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

A MOTHER'S DEATH-BED	313
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LOAF OF BREAD	323
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXII.

WORKING BY NIGHT	335
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RESCUE INTERRUPTED	343
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

	PAGE
THE JESUIT AGAIN IN USE	355

CHAPTER XXXV.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST	362
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH	370
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE JESUIT ASSAULTED	377
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ANTOINE REACHES HIS FRIENDS	387
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST	394
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XL.

TOGETHER IN DEATH	402
-----------------------------	-----

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

THE period in the history of the Reformation in Holland of which the following tale treats is somewhat later than that usually illustrated in works of this kind or in actual histories. We have now reached a time when the republic of the seven northern provinces was firmly established. Though still at war with Spain, it was no longer a life-and-death struggle. The republic was gaining in strength and in wealth, while Spain was fast and irrecoverably losing in both. At the same time, the Reformed Church was acquiring more and more the character and position of a State-Church, and not without some of the evils which usually accompany State-Churchism. Many grew to be at ease in Zion or only in a perfunctory and lifeless manner cherished the convictions of the Reformation. There grew to be less depth of conscious religious feeling and a lack of Christian earnestness. These evils none

but the spiritually-minded discerned and lamented. Men of piety, such as our evangelist and the illustrious patriot whose name occurs in these pages, strove, although by different methods, to avert them.

In the course of the following story an instructive contrast is presented between the condition of the northern and southern provinces on the matter of religious enlightenment. While the Reformation had obtained an immovable footing in the northern provinces and religious tolerance was the portion of all sects in Flanders, Brabant and the sister-provinces, now embraced in the kingdom of Belgium, Rome was not only influential, but dominant, and as intolerant as ever. Hence it is not an anachronism to introduce the Inquisition as in force there as late as the year 1609, when such a name was almost forgotten in the North. There had been, therefore, very little advance in these parts since the days of the placard of Charles V., and an actual retrogression since the petition of the Beggars (*les Gueux*), in April, 1566, when noblemen of either faith could protest against the monstrous institution.

A last point to be noted is that this story intro-

duces us to some of the questionable practices and machinations of the famous order of the Jesuits. The rise of this order—although, of course, directly productive of indefatigable laborers in the cause of Rome—may yet be attributed indirectly to the Reformation. It originated in the desire to counteract this overwhelming assault against Romanism, and Loyola has been not unjustly compared by a brilliant essayist and historian with Luther. Indeed, a resemblance in many points of character and of purpose may successfully be traced. The presentation of one of these Jesuits engaged in a design quite in keeping with the Jesuitical modes of operation for serving the interests of the papacy may well be deemed instructive. It will help to call attention to all the effects and influences exerted by the Reformation upon the age wherein it occurred.

The character of Antoine Moreau is not entirely a fictitious one. In the *Great Book of Martyrs*—which contains, in the Dutch language, a record of the martyrology of the Netherland provinces—we find an account of one “Antonius Moreau, born at Monne, a village not far from Courtray, in Flanders,” who was persecuted for his faith. He was confined “at Tournay, in the bishop’s prison, where

he was kept for many years and subjected to great suffering." When it became evident that all their cruelties could not move Moreau from his steadfastness, the inquisitors "let him finally die of starvation. The clerical authorities of Tournay caused the remains to be buried under the gallows of a village situated within the bishopric, about a mile from the city." These incidents accord sufficiently with those of the tale. The greatest discrepancy is one of dates; the true date of Moreau's death is January, 1601. The author has remained rigorously true to history. The alterations ventured upon by the translator shift the year to 1609, but the variance from fact is borne out, we trust, by poetic (or romantic) license.

The change introduced by the translator is simply this: In the original the story is in two parts, under different titles. The foundling of the first part is not reproduced in the second. Yet why all that elaborate plot about a child of which nothing more is heard afterward? It was therefore thought best by a few easy alterations to make the youth Antoine Moreau of the second part identical with the "soldier's ward" of the first, thus giving unity to the whole story.

During the summer of 1886 we spent a Sabbath at Leyden. We walked along the very road traveled by Walter Harmsen and Joris Ruikmans. A little distance from the city we saw a country-seat with a very long lane of beech trees, so that the house beyond was hardly visible. On inquiry we found that this was formerly occupied by Philip of Marnix and had remained in possession of his descendants till within fifty years ago. Pursuing our walk farther on, we came to the road or lane crossing the highway to The Hague and running from Voorschoten to Wassenaar; it is still called the "Papen Weg," or "Popish road." Arrived at Wassenaar, we attended church, the service being finished about four o'clock, the time set for the beginning of Walter's preaching in the barn. In the morning we had attended church in St. Peter's at Leyden (where John Robinson, the Puritan pastor, lies buried), and by a strange coincidence the preacher's text was that passage in Revelation which contains the subject of Walter's sermon: "Fine linen is the righteousness of saints." After attending church at Wassenaar a walk of about half an hour brought us to the sandhills, which rise and fall in bold ridges and deep valleys, stretching to

the sea-coast, a distance of four miles beyond ; we saw several little buildings which reminded us of Hugh's wretched hut in the sandhills. Returning to Leyden, we noticed along the road to Voorschoten thick bushes beneath the trees that line the highway on either side ; the Jesuits' hireling could easily have hid himself from observation among them. Finally, we looked up the Mare gate, near which lived the Widow Van Dyk ; it is now a mere name, for the gate itself has been removed. It was exceedingly pleasant, with the incidents of this story in our minds, to make visits to these several points. It is in the hope that a more vivid interest may be awakened in the minds of others who may read these pages that an account of these personal observations has been introduced in this note.

D. V. P.

THE SOLDIER'S WARD.

CHAPTER I.

A DEALER IN FINE LINEN.

IT was the autumn of the year 1598. The sun was near his setting. A flood of golden light irradiated the western sky, affording a brilliant background to the sombre hues of the lofty oaks and beeches of the forest. The air was very mild; and had not the variegated tints of the foliage reminded one that it was the month of October, it might readily have been supposed that the summer had not yet departed. The unusually fine weather had tempted many persons to walk out into the country, although it was Saturday evening, which, according to the venerable custom of Holland, was sacredly observed as the preparation for the Lord's day.

It was in the immediate vicinity of the city of Leyden that we notice this delightful autumn weather prevailing. It is not, however, the Leyden of this nineteenth century to which we invite

the attention of the reader, but as it appeared in 1598. Quite recovered from the effects of its terrible and long-continued siege sustained in 1574, the city enjoyed, at the time our tale opens, secure repose not only, but the most signal prosperity. This was due as much to its world-famous university, granted in reward for its heroic sufferings, as to its numerous manufactures, which, indeed, were no less celebrated. The so-called "draperie" industry furnished a comfortable sustenance to hundreds of artisans, such as "skin-washers, skin-dressers, weavers, combers and fullers." These people to a great extent hailed from foreign parts, mostly from the provinces of Brabant and Flanders, having fled thence to escape the ever-increasing persecutions by the Spanish authorities. And gladly did the corporation and the good burghers of Leyden welcome these refugees. They recognized them as their brethren persecuted for the faith which they themselves held dear, and they furthermore wisely considered that by their settlement in the Dutch republic the commerce and the industrial arts of the southern provinces would be transferred to the North. Leyden, which had been so deeply afflicted and so nearly ruined, especially needed the prosperity which the residence in her midst of these skilled artisans might well be expected to secure for her. The city had not been disappointed in her expectations, and with grateful acknowledgment

of God's good providence many an ancient chronicler of Leyden records the flourishing condition and the growing wealth of the place. Leyden, then, in the year 1598 enjoyed God's favor in abundant measure; and could the reader have visited the city at that time, he would have been surprised to see the stir of the busy crowds and the multitude of merchants offering their goods for sale in the different markets or in their stores.

On the above-mentioned Saturday afternoon the streets and the suburbs seemed unusually thronged. The regular weekly "market-day"—which at that time was held upon "the new cattle-market, situated near the new Haarlem gate"—had closed some hours ago, but many merchants still lingered here and there, looking over their accounts, packing their wares, counting profits or exchanging money, while others—farmers from surrounding villages—were hitching their horses to their wagons. Add to these the respectable burghers who after the day's occupations had betaken themselves to the meadows and the pleasure-grounds outside the walls to enjoy a hearty game of ball or bowling or to take advantage of the exceptional weather for an evening stroll, and you will have some idea of the busy scene that would have greeted your eyes upon that Saturday evening.

We will not, however, remain among these crowds of happy men, women and children, nor pay a visit

to the places of amusement situated just outside the Hoogewoerts gate, upon the "Broerspadt" road. On the contrary, let us follow a dignified pedestrian whom we see leaving a house in the Nobel street. Passing by the town-hall and the meat-market, he continues along Broad street to the "North End." Arrived there, he leaves the White gate on the left, and, walking around the old redoubt called "the Pelican," he reaches the bank of the Rhine. Finding a rowboat conveniently near, he rows across the river to a footpath leading up the grassy shore to the high-road that connects Leyden and The Hague.

After our pedestrian has proceeded about a mile he observes not far from him a person who appears exhausted, for he is seated upon the ground and leaning against a mile-stone. Approaching closer, our friend is surprised to notice the exceedingly short stature of the weary traveler; and when by the declining rays of the sun he succeeds in making out the manikin's features, it strikes him that he has met the man before.

"Good-evening, friend," said he to the dwarf, who had arisen at his approach; "you seem tired."

"So I am, worthy sir," replied the other. "I have walked many a step to-day, and I expect it will be two hours yet before I can get to bed, if I get under cover at all."

"Must you reach The Hague to-night?" asked

the first traveler, as side by side the two proceeded on their way.

"No, not to-night. I stay over-night near Voorschoten, rest there to-morrow, then the day after go on to The Hague, where I live."

"Why are you afraid you will not get under cover to-night?" asked his companion.

"So many dangerous characters infest the highway, sir, especially at night."

"Do you fear them?" was the somewhat reproachful rejoinder. "Do you not know that the Saviour said, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows'?"

"True, sir," replied the little man, meanwhile changing from one shoulder to the other a small bundle that seemed quite heavy. "That may be a very excellent thing to think of, but nevertheless I cannot help remembering that a well-to-do merchant was attacked and robbed near this very spot."

"The more reason, then, that you, now that you are exposed to a similar danger, should put your trust in the Lord."

"That may be true. But do not suppose, sir," said the manikin, "that I am afraid. No; so sure as my name is Joris Ruikmans—and I was christened thus on St. Martin's day in the year '47—I am

not a bit afraid ; but if I can avoid danger, I do so."

"You are right in that, my friend," replied his companion, who had attentively listened as he gave his name ; "you must not wantonly run into danger, and you need not fancy that you are doing so here upon this highway and at this hour."

"But I have some hours yet to spend on this road," said the little man, again changing the bundle, "and it will soon be dark. Do you go much farther, sir?"

"No ; I expect to reach my destination in about ten minutes," replied the other.

"I wish I were as fortunate as you are ; but what must not a man undergo to earn a few pennies !"

"Ah ! then you are a peddler?" rejoined the other, regarding the manikin with no little astonishment.

"Rightly guessed, sir. I was not exactly born to it, for I was formerly quite otherwise employed, but, now that I am once a peddler of ribbons and garters, I know how to manage pretty well. Are you a merchant or a dealer in any kind of goods?"

"Yes," responded our friend.

"What kind of wares do you sell, if I may ask?"

"I deal in fine linen, and hope to dispose of a goodly quantity to-morrow."

The little man came to a sudden halt, and, re-

garding the speaker in blank amazement, he stammered,

“Am I, then, mistaken?”

“How so?” inquired our pedestrian, smiling.

“I thought you were a Reformed preacher of Leyden or elsewhere, since both your dress and your words of a moment ago when you reminded me of Heaven’s assistance made me suppose so.”

“Well, if I *am* a preacher, what then?”

“Then I should much doubt your sincerity; for though my name is Joris Ruikmans—and as such I have been baptized and brought up, as my fathers before me, in the true and saving Church—I have too much common sense to think that a good Reformed preacher would be so inconsistent.”

“What, in your opinion, is ‘a good Reformed preacher’?” queried our friend, still smiling.

“That—just now leaving his faith out of the question—he will not so far forget his office as to become a dealer in fine linen, and especially that he will not offer his goods for sale on the Sabbath. Our priests are not so particular about Sundays, and are satisfied if we only respect the holy-days; but the Reformed Church, which does not observe any saints’ days, is very strict in requiring the observance of the Sabbath. Am I wrong in this, sir?”

“No, you are not wrong, friend,” was the reply. “The Reformed Church has declared in her Con-

fession—which, as I believe, is founded upon God's word—that her members shall upon the Sabbath-day diligently repair to the house of God to hear the preaching of the gospel, to partake of the sacraments, to call on the name of the Lord, and to minister to the necessity of the believing poor. I am of the conviction, also, that every Christian, to whatsoever Church he may belong, is under equal obligation to—”

“Yet you who thus speak,” interrupted the man-ikin—“you yourself intend to engage in trade to-morrow, Sunday?”

“Yes, and, as I told you, to dispose of some fine linen.”

“Are you not a Christian, then?”

“Yes, by God's grace,” replied the other.

“And at the same time one who will trade in fine linen to-morrow?” repeated the little man, with growing astonishment.

“Yes, and I would like to dispose of some of it to you. Could you be at Wassenaar to-morrow afternoon?”

“I think I could,” replied the dwarf.

“Well, if you can, be there about four o'clock, inquire for Walter Harmsen—”

“‘Walter Harmsen’!” exclaimed the other, and checked himself again, still more amazed. “Are you Walter Harmsen?”

“Yes; that is my name.”

“The evangelist who travels and preaches throughout the land?”

“The same.”

“Did I not often meet you near Utrecht twenty years ago?”

“Yes, Joris,” replied our friend, whom we have now learned to know by his name. “I recognized you at once, and was only waiting for a favorable opportunity to make myself known to you.”

It was impossible for Walter Harmsen to proceed a step farther, with such fervent cordiality did the little man seize and press both his hands and such was the torrent of questions that broke from his lips. For, indeed, much had happened during this interval of nearly twenty years since last they met, and on Walter’s side, too, there was no lack of curiosity and interest in regard to the fortunes of little Joris. We shall not weary the reader with a detailed account of the questions and answers that passed between them, but give our own version of the events that they related to each other.

We left Joris Ruikmans still in the service of Father Baldwin, whose labors as librarian were at Lord Gerard’s urgent desire transferred from the monastery to Vlooswyk castle. After the death of the venerable man Joris had left the castle, and after much wandering and uncertainty had finally settled in The Hague, where he married and set up trade in a small way in thread, garters and other

dry goods, or "notions," his wife managing the little shop while he peddled the goods. Lord Gerard van Vlooswyk, after a brief sojourn in the province of Utrecht, had with his wife and daughter taken up his residence in France; for his health, shattered by his long imprisonment, demanded a permanent abode in a milder climate. Walter Harmsen, as we know, though drawn by many ties of affection and regard to the inmates of the castle, could not resolve to settle down to do ministerial work in some parish near Vlooswyk, being moved by an irrepressible longing to traverse the length and breadth of the land in the capacity of evangelist. Nor could he be induced to leave the country when the nobleman's family departed for France. Still, a tolerably regular correspondence was maintained between them, and there was some prospect that before long Lady Jacoba would visit her native land. Within a few months Walter had taken up his residence in Leyden for the double purpose of pursuing some special studies in certain lines of doctrinal theology and of giving himself to the work of preaching the gospel in country places in the vicinity, where he had discovered much lingering superstition and much ignorance of real saving truth. He was in the habit of holding services in private houses or barns in localities where churches were as yet lacking.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOLDIER'S WARD.

“**W**ERE you not saying, Mr. Harmsen,” inquired Joris when they had again proceeded on their way, “that you expected to dispose of some fine linen at Wassenaar to-morrow?”

“That is what I said and meant, Joris,” replied Harmsen, smiling.

“On Sunday?”

“Yes, precisely—on Sunday. That is the peculiarity of my trade: I have the greatest number of customers on that day, although, unfortunately, there are always more lookers-on than purchasers.”

“I must say,” answered Joris, taking his little package under his arm, “that I do not at all understand you.”

“Then I can give you no better counsel than to be at Wassenaar to-morrow afternoon at four o’clock, at the house of the wagonmaker Ledeganck. Will you be there?”

“I shall certainly be there,” replied Joris, decisively; “for, really, I am curious to know how a Reformed preacher can sell fine linen on Sunday.”

"Well, you shall see. Perhaps I am speaking to you in riddles, but I trust you will find them solved to-morrow. It is with this as with all spiritual things, which can be discerned only by the initiated—that is, by those who are God's children. It is even as the Saviour himself said: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'"

"Your words," observed Joris, "remind me of a certain officer who lives in my neighborhood and is in the habit of speaking much as you do. I can hardly enter upon any conversation with him but he has something to say to me about the Saviour."

"I know what officer you mean, Joris: it is my old friend Dirk Gapertz, now retired from the army. I see him occasionally. When did you last meet him?"

"Hardly a week ago, Mr. Harmsen."

"Was he in good health?"

"The major complained much of pains in his right leg."

"Yes; no wonder! His right foot was shot off by a cannon-ball about six years ago at the siege of Steenwyk. Besides, since that he was wounded in his shoulder, and he has not quite recovered from the effects of this; so that he is a real invalid."

"But the major is always in excellent humor and most of the time looks as happy and cheerful as a

child to whom some great good fortune has just happened. I cannot comprehend this. Formerly, indeed, I had something of this myself, but since my cares have increased with the years it seems to me as if I had left all my lightheartedness behind me in Utrecht, and the future sometimes looks pretty dark."

"I am sorry that is the case with you, Joris. The major cannot be without his anxieties and cares; he has no independent means, but must get along with a limited pension as a retired officer. But have you ever reflected how it happens that the major can always be of such good cheer, while you worry about so many things?"

"I confess, Mr. Harmsen, that I haven't given it any thought."

"Then I will tell you, Joris: the major is assured of salvation and that a better life awaits him."

"But how can he be assured of that, Mr. Harmsen, before he has obtained full absolution? Or do you teach this assurance in your Reformed churches?"

"It is the teaching of Scripture, Joris. The infallible word of God assures every sinner that Jesus Christ came into the world to save him, and that whosoever believeth on him *hath* eternal life. What you call 'absolution,' and which your priests pretend to be able to give you, is nothing but the blood

of Jesus, by which we are cleansed from our sins. This the major believes with all his heart, and therefore he cheerfully faces the future, knowing that through Christ he has a part in the eternal life."

"He has more than once told me this himself, Mr. Harmsen. But still I do not see how this can be. No matter how much I may desire to enjoy this same assurance, I know of no way by which to obtain it."

"There is a very simple way, Joris, open to you, and to every one of us. I am afraid you do not see it because you depend a little too much upon what the priests tell you about God's teachings of salvation and do not look into them for yourself to discover what they really are. As to your worrying about earthly matters, it is not strange that you do so while you reverse the command of God."

"How so?" inquired Joris, somewhat surprised.

"The Lord Jesus says, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things'—that is, earthly, temporal things, of which Jesus had been speaking—'shall be added unto you.' Just try this; do not give your first and only thought to matters of earthly concern, but believe that God loves you and will care for you, and you will have peace instead of trouble."

Thus conversing, the two pedestrians had come opposite an open gate that gave access to a lane lined

on each side with beech trees and leading to a small country-seat just visible in the dim twilight. Walter Harmsen here arrested his steps and remarked to Joris,

“This is my destination, friend Joris.”

“This?” replied the latter. “Is not this the residence of Philip of Marnix, lord of St. Aldegonde?”

“It is,” assented Harmsen. “The venerable statesman and bosom-friend of William the Silent occupies this little country-seat in the summer, though in the winter he lives at his house in Leyden. But how did you know that Lord Marnix resides here? Are you acquainted with him?”

“No, not yet, Mr. Harmsen,” replied Joris, “but I hope shortly to have an opportunity of paying him a visit.”

“You?” exclaimed Walter Harmsen, in great astonishment.

“Yes, I,” answered Joris, lifting himself to his full height. “Are you so surprised that such a little man as I am should have access to so celebrated a nobleman?”

“No; that does not surprise me in the least, for Lord Marnix is a humble man not at all proud of his birth, his great accomplishments or his celebrated deeds. But I would gladly know your relations with Lord Marnix, and, although my engagements as well as yours perhaps are pressing,

may I ask you, if I am not too impertinent, to explain this to me?"

"Very gladly will I do so, Mr. Harmsen. I have already informed you that Major Gapertz and I are on somewhat intimate terms. Our acquaintance not only dates from our meeting in Utrecht—of which you know—but has been especially close within the last six years. You must know that I have in my charge a ward of the major's."

"Indeed! I remember my friend speaking of some such child in which he had taken an interest, but I cannot say that I exactly recall the circumstances that placed it under his care. Will you repeat these to me?"

"Certainly, Mr. Harmsen. During the siege of Steenwyk by Prince Maurice, the Spanish general Verdugo succeeded in throwing a small reinforcement into the city, but only after being seriously crippled by the States' troops. The rear-guard of the detachment which brought the enemy this reinforcement was attacked by troops under Baron Jacob van Marnix and Major Gapertz, who were charged with cutting off Verdugo's men, and a number of Spanish and Flemish soldiers were made prisoners. Among these prisoners was found a child of about three years of age; no one knew how it came to be with the soldiers. After many unsuccessful attempts to ascertain who were the parents of the child—which could utter only a few

unintelligible words—the major resolved to adopt it, with the consent of the prince, while Baron Jacob also agreed to contribute toward the expense of bringing it up. When he returned to The Hague, the major requested my wife to act as its foster-mother, which with the greatest willingness she consented to do.”

“But I do not understand,” said Walter Harmsen, “how the major, who is zealously attached to the Reformed Church, could give the child in charge to you, who, as I learn from your own words, do yet belong to the Roman Catholic Church.”

“I can soon explain this,” said Joris. “Not long after our marriage my wife went over to the Reformed Church, which I gave her entire liberty to do; for each one must believe as he thinks best. She was chosen as foster-mother not so much by reason of my acquaintance with the major, but more on her own account. She was formerly in the service of Baron Jacob’s father in-law, and Lady Veronica was very fond of her; hence both gentlemen resolved to entrust the care of the child with her. She is greatly attached to it, and herself presented it for baptism.”

“Indeed? Then she must take charge of its spiritual welfare as well as of its bodily comfort?”

“Yes, Mr. Harmsen,” answered Joris. “My wife is so thoroughly Reformed in her faith that

she could not endure the thought of bringing up the child without Reformed baptism, for she suspected that it was of Roman Catholic parents. Accordingly, it was baptized in the Klooster church, at The Hague, in the presence of the major, Baron Jacob and Lady Veronica, while their youngest daughter gave a name to the little one."

"Then its name is Walburg?"

"No, not that exactly, Mr. Harmsen," laughed Joris. "It was slightly changed, so that the full name reads Walburgius Steenwyk, after the city where it was found. But, although it has half a girl's name, it has grown up a fine boy who seems to give precious little heed to the doctrines which my wife would as it were by force imprint upon his mind. To her great grief, he betrays both his Southern blood and his Southern faith. He is now nine years old, so far as we can guess, and toward the latter part of this month he is to spend a few days at the house of Lord Philip of Marnix. I will then have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Lord Philip. You may remember, Mr. Harmsen, that I was always a great admirer of learning, and is not Lord Marnix very learned?"

"Yes, indeed, Joris," replied Walter Harmsen, with difficulty suppressing a smile. "You can have your fill of admiration as you look at Lord Philip, for he is very learned. Even now, although

suffering much from the gout, he is engaged upon labors committed to him by the States-General."

"What may those labors be?" inquired Joris, with amusing eagerness.

"The translation of the Holy Scriptures from the original languages into the Dutch. He is a thorough master of those difficult tongues. But, with all his learning, he is a person of great simplicity—a man whom to know is to love. I count it among my greatest enjoyments to spend an evening in conversation with him."

"Does Lord Marnix occupy the country-house all alone?"

"Oh no; just now his son, Baron Jacob van Marnix, and wife and daughter, are spending the autumn season with him. Also, very near here is the residence of Baron Wessel van den Boetzelaar, who, as you will remember, was married this summer to Amelia, the daughter of Lord Philip. He is constantly receiving visits from men prominent in the State or in the learned professions; so that, you see, he is not left solitary in his old age. But it becomes high time we part company. Now, do not forget our appointment; I shall look for you to-morrow afternoon about four o'clock at the house of the wagonmaker Ledeganck."

"Where you will sell fine linen?"

"I shall at least offer it for sale."

"Then I will have to provide myself with money,

of which I do not have an abundance ; for, although this little package is full of bright metal, it doesn't belong to me."

Thus speaking, the manikin lifted the heavy package and placed it upon his right shoulder.

Walter Harmsen smiled, then, after a moment's reflection, laid his hand upon the dwarf's other shoulder, and, looking him kindly and intently in the eye, he said with earnest emphasis,

"Oh that your ears might be opened to comprehend spiritual things ! Believe me, the wares that I shall to-morrow offer for sale are so costly that they are not to be gotten for gold or for silver ; yet you and every one who will may possess them. But ask me no further now ; come to-morrow, and you will know what I mean. Good-bye !"

Taking Joris by the hand and wishing him a safe arrival at home, Walter Harmsen passed through the gate and went up the lane, while Joris, after for a few moments watching the retreating form of the incomprehensible merchant, passed by the gate, and soon left the highway to enter a footpath that led more directly to Voorschoten.

CHAPTER III.

A LIVING MAN-TRAP.

OUR friend Joris Ruikmans walked on in solitude along the footpath that led to Wyngaerden House, with whose steward he was to transact some business. He expected to stay over-night at the mansion and either to spend the following day at Voorschoten or to go on to The Hague. The country through which he was now passing was not very woody—only occasionally could be seen a cluster of trees—but the path was frequently skirted by thick hedges. The air was very mild, and, although the moon had not yet risen, it could not be said that it was quite dark. Joris did not greatly hurry his steps, for he was plunged in deeper thought than usual, caused by the many wholesome words which Walter Harmsen had addressed to him. Every few steps he stopped to shift the heavy little bundle, with its precious contents, from one shoulder to the other; but at length he noticed in the distance the tall oaks surrounding Wyngaerden House, and he knew that he could not be much more than a mile from his destination.

Suddenly, Joris thought he heard whispering voices, and, recollecting what had happened not long ago in this vicinity, he deemed it prudent to seek a hiding-place—not so much for fear of his life as of being robbed of his money. Being so very diminutive of person, he found little difficulty in completely concealing himself by creeping beneath an unusually dense hedge. He experienced some slight inconvenience and pain from the numerous thorns; but when once he had reached the centre of the hedge, he had the satisfaction of knowing that it would require considerably more than moonlight to discover his position: he could, therefore, without much fear of discovery wait the approach of the persons whom he had heard whispering together. Ere long they were close upon him.

“I tell you,” said one of them—“I tell you that our little man can’t be far from here.”

“I am of the same opinion, Geert,” remarked another, who spoke with a decided Flemish accent. “Scarce ten minutes ago did we see him take this path. He could not have got farther than this spot; for if he had gone past this hedge, he would certainly have fallen in with Duik Allers, who was to wait for him at the Papen road-crossing.”

“Exactly,” assented Geert Herman. “It is impossible for the little fellow to escape us. It would be a pity if he did, for, as you say, François, he has a nice lot of money with him.”

"That has he," replied the latter. "Since this morning, when he left The Hague, I kept my eye on him constantly. The last I saw of him he was in the dry-goods shop of Hillebrands, which he left with a package of money in his possession. Then I made haste to notify Duik Allers and you."

"You did right in that, Bardes," said Geert Herman. "But where can the manikin be now? I hope he hasn't heard us approaching and hid himself in the hedge."

"Oh, that we can easily find out," said the Fleming. "Let us go to the end of the hedge; then do you keep on one side, and I on the other, and come back along its whole length, feeling with our swords and looking closely every inch of the way. We sha'n't be long stirring him up out of his hiding-place."

"I approve of your proposition, Bardes," replied Herman.

Advancing a little distance and each taking one side of the hedge, the men slowly retraced their steps, bending low down and sticking their long rapiers between the twigs and the branches.

Joris found himself in no very enviable situation; there seemed great likelihood that the two villains who were bent upon robbing him would discover his hiding-place. What would be the consequences of discovery was easily conjectured, as he would by no means be the first who had been robbed and

murdered in this same neighborhood. His heart beat almost audibly ; he thought of his wife, of his eternal salvation, about which he felt no little concern. But what could he do ? It was idle to think of flight, for the robbers were too close not to hear his footsteps ; and even if he should attempt flight after they had passed him by without discovery, it would not avail, for he had heard that a third villain was waiting for him at the end of the path. All Joris could do, therefore, was to wait for results, and, placing the package of money by his side, he laid himself flat on the ground and sent up to a few of the saints fervent petitions for help in this his hour of need.

"He is not here, Bardes," exclaimed Geert Herman, at last, in tones of impatience. "I am afraid he heard us coming and has escaped through the woods yonder to Sandhorst Castle."

"You are wonderfully impatient, Geert," replied the Fleming. "Let us keep on along the whole length of this thicket. Between the wood yonder and this hedge there is a wide ditch across which he could not leap ; therefore he must be somewhere under the hedge."

"How do you know that so precisely ?" asked the cloth-weaver. "You haven't seen him, any more than I have ; and your vision isn't so very sharp, either."

These last words contained a thrust which was

not at all to François Bardes's liking, for he had only one eye. Therefore he angrily rejoined,

"If I don't *see* quite so sharply, my hearing is so much the better. At least, I heard pretty well what was said in a certain mill near Steenwyk, and how the mother of the child—"

"You lie, fellow!" cried Geert Herman, from the other side of the hedge. "You heard nothing. That's something you have made up yourself. As if I did not know that you can lie like Satan!"

"Yes," said the Fleming, becoming more furious at these words, "as if I was as great a rascal as you are! I suppose I also lie when I say that you honestly made that money which the Jesuits gave you to hand over to Peter Panne, who was to assassinate Prince Maurice?"

"You lie again, fellow!" cried Herman. "I gave you the half of it. And wasn't Peter Panne locked up before I could get a chance to give him the money?"

"A fine half you gave me," mocked Bardes; "you gave me scarce enough to get me a few cans of beer. But that's the way you always do. So would you do if we got hold of Joris. You would cut his throat, take the money and leave me the empty bag."

Joris instinctively put his hand up to his throat to feel if it were safe, and trembled with fright.

"'Cut his throat'?" said Herman.

"Yes; what else would you do?" inquired the Fleming. "Isn't that what you did to—"

"You lie! you lie!" screamed Geert. "What shall hinder me but I—"

"And what would you do to me, you long-necked villain?" cried Bardes, swinging his rapier over the hedge. "Do you think I am afraid of you? You are a rascal of the deepest dye. But this very night shall Sheriff Loth Huyghens Gael know what kind of man you are."

"I will not let you say this to me, you one-eyed Fleming!" cried the infuriated Herman. "I will show you how I can shorten your long liar's tongue."

So saying, Geert made a movement as if to hurl himself upon his antagonist, but in his passion he forgot that the hedge was between them. He therefore exerted himself to the utmost to force his way through, but the hedge was too wide and too thick to allow of his doing so; and, to the great delight of Bardes, who stood watching his fruitless efforts, he cut himself in numberless places with the sharp thorns.

"I must and will get through!" exclaimed Geert Herman.

"What would you do if you did?" tauntingly said Bardes. "Don't you understand that I am not afraid of such a fellow as you are, and that my sword is sharper than your tongue?"

"Wretch!" cried Herman, trying to force his way headforemost and roaring with the pain caused by the thorns. "I must and will get through this hedge and stop that mouth of yours."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Bardes. "When you are halfway, I'll pin you fast to the branches with my sword. Perhaps you have in your pockets something which may be of use to me."

The cloth-weaver now redoubled his efforts to get to the other side and trod down leaves and twigs with his coarse shoes, when suddenly there was heard a scream which seemed to ascend from the very ground beneath their feet.

"What is that?" exclaimed both villains at once, while they looked in all directions.

A second time the strange half-smothered cry was heard.

"My leg! my leg!" cried Geert Herman at the same time. "Some one has got me by the leg and is pricking it with a knife. Help! help! There's the very living devil hacking away at my leg!"

This living devil, of course, was none other than Joris Ruikmans. In his eagerness to press through the hedge Geert had stepped upon one arm of the dwarf, who could not repress a cry of pain. He then bethought him that the best thing he could do was to hold the robber by the leg and prick him with his knife, and thus bring him to terms.

"It is our manikin," exclaimed Bardes, who had

bent down to ascertain the cause of the noise. "We have got him now. Now the money is ours, for sure."

In the same instant all enmity between the robbers was forgotten.

"Hold him, Geert," said the Fleming, "and pull him from under the hedge, and I'll run around to your side and lend a hand."

"It is easy enough for you to say so, Bardes," replied the weaver, between his cries of pain; "the little fellow holds my legs so tightly that I can't stir."

This was indeed the case. Joris, but too truly surmising what fate might be awaiting him, now exerted all the strength of despair, and held the legs of Herman in so firm an embrace that the villain, who had fallen with his face among the thorns, could make no movement to extricate himself.

Meanwhile, Bardes had run around to the other side of the hedge, and had nearly reached the spot where Joris was struggling for dear life, when of a sudden rapidly-approaching footsteps were heard, as of some one running, and soon they perceived that it was their accomplice, Duik Allers.

"Is that you, Duik?" said Herman.

"Yes," replied the other, hurriedly. "I am glad I met you. Quick! save yourselves. The steward of Wyngaerden is after us."

“Where? Where is he?” cried Bardes, trying to penetrate the darkness.

“Yonder,” cried Duik, pointing with his finger toward some torches moving about at no great distance.

In the same instant voices were heard from several directions, crying,

“Joris! Joris Ruikmans! Where are you?”

“Here!” screamed the little man, from under the hedge.

Bardes did not wait long to betake himself to flight, followed by Duik Allers; but Geert Herman, it need not be said, could not take advantage of the opportunity, for Joris would not let him go and every little while pricked him severely with his knife. The robber roared with pain and kicked with desperate violence, as if he had been attacked by a serpent and were trying to shake it off. But Joris was not to be shaken off.

“Joris Ruikmans!” the voices cried again, now much closer.

“Here!” again shouted Joris from beneath the hedge.

The torches came nearer and nearer; and when they arrived at the spot where Geert Herman was held in this extraordinary man-trap, Joris called out with all his might,

“Here, Mr. Steward! I am sitting here under the hedge, and am holding Geert Herman’s legs.

He meant to cut my throat this evening, and to rob me of my money. Seize him !”

The steward of Wyngaerden House, who had begun to be uneasy about the long tarrying of Joris, had collected the servant-men and gone out to meet him, knowing that the road was not altogether safe at night. Thus they had come in the nick of time to save the dwarf from robbery and murder. They immediately acted upon the request of Joris. They seized the cloth-weaver, bound him securely and conducted him to Wyngaerden House, intending of the morrow to deliver him over into the hands on Mr. Gael, the sheriff.

CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP MARNIX OF ST. ALDEGONDE.

MEANWHILE, Walter Harmsen had leisurely sauntered up the lane leading to the country-seat of Lord Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde. Twenty years had passed since last we saw Walter laboring in the vicinity of the city of Utrecht, preaching the gospel to all within his reach—twenty years of difficulties, griefs and disappointments. It was his hope and trust when first he resolved to give himself, constrained by the love of Christ, to the work of a traveling evangelist, that the hearts of men would be more open to receive the glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven ; but at the age of forty, to his great sorrow, his experience had confirmed the truth of the scriptural declaration that the world loves its own and has no pleasure in the things of God.

Yet Walter's experience had not been all darkness and appointment. The Lord had vouchsafed him the privilege once and again to reap where he himself had sown. There were certain movements in the churches of The Hague and of Leyden, there

was a revival of interest in several other places, which now encouraged him to put forth all the efforts of which he was capable, that he might yet add a few stones to the great temple of God.

Such an awaking of religious interest had been witnessed especially in the village of Wassenaar and its immediate surroundings. This had been materially promoted by the settlement at Leyden of the Puritans, a sect of English Protestants who objected to the practices and doctrines of their national Church, and who had been driven from their country by Queen Elizabeth only a little while before the opening of our tale. These people could not tolerate any marked outward display of religious worship; they were of opinion that the magistrate should abolish altars, clerical garments and every other relic or symbol of former idolatry and superstition in the Church. They were generally very intelligent, simple and sincere Christians. Walter Harmsen fully shared their sentiments, and in many ways was greatly in sympathy with these men of faith. He had accordingly followed up the line of their influence, and had succeeded in bringing many to a more decided life for God. In Wassenaar itself the Lord had largely blessed his labors, and many of the faithful were there to be found; these gathered about him both in public gospel services and in meetings for prayer and religious converse in private houses. Many persons, however, in this

same region who were attached to the more strict ecclesiastical party took but little pleasure in the proceedings of our evangelist and attributed sinister motives to him. But Walter Harmsen gave little heed to these ; he pursued his course undisturbed in mind, and in a spirit of meekness and modest firmness met the obstacles and annoyances that were thrown in his way.

Through the brown foliage of the beech trees Walter perceived the lights of the house he was approaching ; and when quite near, he heard the notes of a psalm sung by the inmates. He soon reached the foot of the flight of steps hewn out of gray stone which led up to a piazza surrounding the house. He stopped to listen to the singing, not wishing to disturb the family in their evening worship. As he stood with his back to the house he heard light footsteps softly coming down the stoop, and before he could turn a pair of arms were thrown around his neck and soft, plump hands were pressed over his eyes. With evident effort at a change of voice the person exclaimed,

“Guess who it is !”

Walter had no difficulty in conjecturing who was perpetrating the mischief, but, being a lover of fun, he affected to be at pains to make a correct guess :

“It is Baron Jacob Marnix.”

The person who held him captive was felt to shake with ill-suppressed laughter.

"Why are you laughing? Did not I guess right?" asked Walter.

"No," said the voice at his back; "Lord Jacob is making verses in his father's study."

"Then it is Lord Philip himself?"

"Wrong!" cried the person, trying still more to change the voice.

"Then it must be the sheriff of Leyden, who, on account of my preaching—"

"Will put you in prison," interrupted the voice. "Wrong again!"

"Then I give it up," said Harmsen. "But wait," he continued, putting his arms behind him and about the owner of the hands; "now you are caught yourself. I'll carry you up the stoop, and there it will have to come out who you are."

Walter accordingly ascended the stone steps with the burden on his back, and, reaching the piazza, he turned and put his prize upon a chair.

"Ah! it is you, is it?" said he, pretending to be astonished. "It is you, Lady Walburg, who lie in wait in the dark for people and attack them from behind?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the little girl, who was none other than Walburg van Marnix, the granddaughter of Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde. "I have been looking for you for the last hour, and could not stand it up stairs any longer. It was not nice of you to be so late. Grandfather is suffering much

from the gout, and father is not too well, either ; but—”

“Methinks I hear your grandfather singing the bass even now.”

“That’s what grandfather always does when he is in pain. He says there is no merit in singing when one is well, but that it is a sign of the soundness of a soul when it can force a person to sing while the body is ill.”

Walter smiled at this naïve repetition of the great patriot’s sentiments.

“But I am glad you have come, Mr. Harmsen,” continued the vivacious child, jumping from the chair, but holding Walter’s hands. “Come up stairs with me right away. You will stay overnight with us?”

“That was my intention, dear Walburg,” answered Harmsen, kissing her on the forehead. “I want to have some good long talks with you, and perhaps, if your father will permit it, I shall take you along to Wassenaar with me to-morrow.”

At this moment one of the housemaids appeared upon the piazza, requesting Lady Walburg to come into the house, as the family were uneasy about her long stay.

“Now, that is your fault,” said Walburg, with mock severity. “Why were you so long coming? Let us hurry up stairs.”

Quickly tripping up the stairs before him, the

girl soon conducted him into the room where the family were seated. The apartment was not large, and was furnished with exceeding plainness. Over a large oaken table hung suspended a copper lamp whose two burning wicks afforded but a dim light. At this table were seated two gentlemen who it could readily be seen by a careful observer were father and son, although a painful malady, the consequence of a severe wound received at the siege of Steenwyk, had reduced the vigor of the younger man till he looked much older than his real age. Opposite them both sat a lady whose amiable and attractive countenance at once impressed the casual observer. She was the wife of Baron Jacob, the Lady Veronica. She had been listening intently to the conversation of her husband and her father-in-law while they had been discussing the versification of a passage in a psalm translated by the latter from the Hebrew; and when they had put it to the test by singing, she had joined her beautiful voice to theirs, much heightening the effect of the psalmody.

The elder of the two gentlemen was Philip van Marnix, lord of St. Aldegonde. He was a bent and gray-haired man of some sixty years whose vigorous constitution had succumbed less to the weight of these years than to the burdens of state, and to the public cares and personal bereavements incident to a period of turbulent political move-

ments and sanguinary warfare. He wore the collar with the large starched folds of the period, while his shoulders were enveloped in a mantle of brown fur; his feet likewise were carefully wrapped in the same, to counteract the pangs of the gout. In his hand he held a sheet of writing-paper, upon which he had jotted down several notes with the assistance of his son, who was also a lover of learning, although not so greatly accomplished as his father.

This, then, was the man who by birth, character, Christian virtues, achievements and accomplishments had adorned his age, and might well have adorned any age. We cannot forbear quoting somewhat extensively from Mr. Motley's description of his character and attainments.

"There were few more brilliant characters," writes Mr. Motley, "than he in all Christendom. He was a man of a most rare and versatile genius. He was a scholar ripe and rare, no holiday trifler in the gardens of learning. He spoke and wrote Latin like his native tongue. He could compose poignant Greek epigrams. He was so familiar with Hebrew that he rendered the Psalms of David out of the original into flowing Flemish verse for the use of the Reformed churches. That he possessed the modern tongues of civilized Europe—Spanish, Italian, French and German—was a matter of course. He was a profound jurisconsult capable of holding debate against all competitors upon any point of

theory or practice of law, civil, municipal, international. He was a learned theologian and had often proved himself a match for the doctors, bishops or rabbins of Europe in highest argument of dogma, creed or tradition. He was a practiced diplomatist constantly employed in delicate and difficult negotiations by William the Silent, who ever admired his genius, cherished his friendship and relied upon his character. He was an eloquent orator whose memorable harangue, beyond all his other efforts, at the Diet of Worms, had made the German princes hang their heads with shame when, taking a broad view of the Netherland matter, he had shown that it was the great question of Europe; . . . that Protestantism could not be unraveled into shreds; . . . that the war, in short, was to be met [by Germany] on the threshold, or else that it would come to seek her at home—a prophecy which the horrible 'Thirty Years' War was in after-time most signally to verify.

“He was a poet of vigor and originality, for he had accomplished what has been achieved by few: he had composed a national hymn whose strophes as soon as heard struck a chord in every Netherland heart and for three centuries long have rung like a clarion wherever the Netherland tongue is spoken. . . . He was supposed to be the author of the famous *Compromise of the Nobles*—that earliest and most conspicuous of the state-papers of the re-

public—and of many other political documents, and he has contributed to general literature many works of European celebrity.

“He was a soldier courageous, untiring, prompt in action, useful in council, and had distinguished himself in many a hard-fought field. . . . From the incipient stages of the revolt he had been foremost among the patriots. . . .

“Scholar, theologian, diplomatist, swordsman, orator, poet, pamphleteer, he had genius for all things and was eminent in all. . . . Of ancient Savoyard extraction, and something of a Southern nature, he had been born in Brussels and was national to the heart’s core. . . . A man of interesting, sympathetic presence, of a physiognomy where many of the attaching and attractive qualities of his nature revealed themselves; with crisp curling hair surmounting a tall, expansive forehead full of benevolence, idealism and quick perceptions; broad, brown, melancholy eyes overflowing with tenderness; a lean and haggard cheek; a rugged Flemish nose; a thin, flexible mouth; a slender moustache and a peaked and meagre beard: so appeared Sainte Aldegonde in the forty-seventh year of his age, when he came to command in Antwerp.”*

This was the turning-point of the active and useful life of St. Aldegonde. The siege of Antwerp resulted, after many months of brave, determined

* *United Netherlands*, vol. i. pp. 145–148.

and skillful defence, in its surrender (1586) to the prince of Parma, the greatest captain of his age. This reverse of fortune on St. Aldegonde's part was gravely resented by the States-General of the republic of the Netherlands; the bosom-friend of William the Silent was even accused of treasonable designs. With difficulty, yet with final and triumphant success, did he clear himself of all unworthy imputations; but his political influence and his public life were at an end. He devoted himself henceforth to learned pursuits. In 1591 he published his version of the Psalms in Dutch rhyme. In 1598 he was commissioned by the States-General to prepare a new translation of the Bible from the original tongues—a work which was interrupted by his death, near the same year, and a few months after the opening of our tale.

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT MAN AT HOME.

AS Walter and little Walburg entered the family-room its three occupants were just singing a stanza of a psalm translated by Lord Philip; stopping at the door, the former joined their voices to those of the latter in the closing lines of the stanza. Out of reverence for the sacred and solemn exercise, the family made no movement to welcome their guest except by a nod of recognition.

“Welcome to our home, friend Harmsen!” said Lord Marnix when the stanza was finished. Unable to rise from his chair, he extended his hand and pressed Walter’s with much cordiality.

“I am greatly rejoiced to see you, Lord Marnix,” said the latter; “I did not think that I should have that pleasure.”

“And why not?” inquired St. Aldegonde, a look of pain overcasting his countenance as he changed the position of his right foot, which caused him most suffering.

“Because I had been informed that you were not well enough to receive any one.”

“As regards my pain, dear friend,” said St. Aldegonde, still holding Walter’s hand in his own, “it has not been overstated—you perceive how I am bound to my chair—but it is not quite so bad that I cannot receive my friends. On the contrary, I delight in being surrounded by them, especially by such of them as will join me in the worship of God. Your visit affords me very great pleasure, for in the evening of my life I find religious conversation and the exercises of piety more and more precious. We were just engaged in comparing my versification of the Psalms with that of Dathenus. But pardon me ! I have not as yet offered you a seat nor afforded opportunity to my son and his wife to extend to you a welcome.”

Baron Jacob had arisen and was bringing a chair to place it for the guest next to that of his father ; he now took Walter by the hand and conducted him to Lady Veronica, who welcomed him in a very cordial manner.

“Walburg was so sorry that you delayed coming, Mr. Harmsen,” she said, in her winning way ; “I had to promise her that she need not retire before you came. If you knew how fond our daughter is of you, you certainly would have hastened your steps. But we are very glad to have you with us at last, and we trust that your visit will be of good length.”

“You are very kind, worthy lady,” said Walter,

“but I have promised my friends at Wassenaar to spend to-morrow in their midst.”

“Are you intending to resume evangelistic services at Wassenaar?” inquired Baron Jacob van Marnix, whose speech was broken by a cough.

“With God’s help, yes,” answered Harmsen.

“I am afraid, friend Harmsen,” observed St. Aldegonde, with a smile, “that you have in mind to found a new sect among those Pietists.”

“I am well aware that you are not speaking seriously, Your Lordship,” replied Walter, who had now seated himself at St. Aldegonde’s side; “but even if you were, I trust that in that case your fear would be replaced by rejoicing.”

“How so?” queried Lord Philip, somewhat abruptly, by reason of a sudden attack of pain.

“I would deem myself very much mistaken in the character of the estimable lord of Marnix,” rejoined Walter, with quiet emphasis, “were I not convinced that he would rejoice to learn that here and there the true people of Christ come together without much external form, rather than that the sinner kept on serving the world and the devil under multiplied religious forms and usages.”

“You do not deceive yourself in your estimate of my character, worthy friend. If I must choose between these two alternatives, I by far prefer the former. You know my sentiments: I am attached with all my heart and soul to our national Church,

watered by the blood of martyrs ; but I have no quarrel with those who are my brethren in Christ, whosoever they are."

"I know it, noble sir," said Walter. "I remember how at one time you invited a conference to meet at your house in order to effect a reconciliation and union of Lutherans and Reformed."

"Yes, but it resulted, alas ! in nothing. The tenacity with which the former held to their Augsburg Confession clashed against the obstinacy of certain rigid Calvinists. You know that when two hard substances strike against each other fire flashes."

"Which consumes instead of warming," interrupted Walter.

"Exactly ; and accordingly I mingle in no more disputations of that nature. But I perceive that my son is leafing through my collection of Psalms. If agreeable to you, we shall unite in singing another psalm."

When the singing had ceased, each remained plunged in silent thought. Lord Philip hummed another tune without pronouncing the words, occasionally rubbing his afflicted limbs. Baron Jacob continued to turn over page after page of the collection, and every now and then pointed out a particularly beautiful line to his wife, who was leaning with her arm on his and looking over his shoulder.

It was then that Walburg seized the opportunity to engage the exclusive attention of Walter. She came to his side, put one arm about his neck and looked him tenderly in the face.

"I am so happy to have you with us," she said, in a low tone, "for I must tell you something that no one else may know."

"Have I, then, become your father-confessor?" asked Walter, smiling. "Are not your father, mother and grandfather in the secret?"

"Oh, certainly! But I mean no one else but you outside of them."

"Well," said Walter, "what is it you have to tell me?"

"Do you know anything about Walburgius Steenwyk?" began the child.

"Yes, a little. That is the boy who is staying with Joris Ruikmans at The Hague, is it not?"

"Yes, under the guardianship of Major Gapertz, my father and—"

"Yourself," smilingly interrupted Walter. "Surely, the boy could have no better guardians."

"Yet the boy is so unhappy!" sighed Walburg; "if you look into his dark eyes, you can easily see that he is not contented. I imagine he is homesick for his own country."

"What country do you think he is from?"

"That can very easily be guessed from his dark-brown complexion," said Walburg, decisively. "He

must be from the South somewhere—possibly from France. I am sure that he is longing for his country and his parents.”

“ ‘ His parents ’ ! ” exclaimed Walter. “ But does he know anything about their whereabouts ? ”

“ No ; no more than do any of us. Nevertheless, I hope to obtain some traces of them.”

“ You ? ” asked Walter, looking at Walburg with an amused but incredulous smile. “ How do you expect to obtain these ? ”

“ By the aid of *your* Jacoba,” replied the little maid, with an arch look.

“ By the aid of *my* Jacoba ? ” repeated Walter, seeming to reflect. “ Do you mean the Lady Jacoba van Vlooswyk, who is with her father in France ? ”

“ Exactly, and who will soon come to visit us here. Did you not tell me that she was *your* Jacoba because you had won her through the gospel ? ”

Walter Harmsen did not reply. His thoughts reverted to all the events and changes of the last twenty years, and these recollections touched many a tender chord in his heart.

At this point Lady Veronica turned and spoke, addressing Harmsen :

“ You observe that Walburg has probed the secrets of your heart. She has entered upon a busy correspondence with Lady Jacoba, whose letters she

prizes all the more because their contents are so largely occupied with you."

"With me?" asked Walter, in some confusion.

"Do you wonder at it?" rejoined Lady Veronica, archly, shaking her finger at him in smiling reproach.

"Oh, you might as well confess," whispered Walburg, "that you are as fond of Jacoba as you are of—me," she added, with amiable egotism.

At this moment a housemaid announced the evening meal. Lord Philip had fallen into a restful doze, enjoying a momentary relief from pain; he was gently aroused by Lady Veronica and conducted by her to the dining-room, followed by her husband, Walter Harmsen and Walburg. Here a simple evening repast was awaiting them.

Gladly would we introduce our readers into this same dining-room, that they might have a view of the Christian simplicity characterizing the everyday life of our forefathers. No doubt, too, the conversation that was held at this table where Marnix of St. Aldegonde was the host was "seasoned with salt." But the course of our narrative calls us elsewhere, and we must not linger here.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STEWARD'S PAYMENT.

NEAR the old Papen road—now called “Papen lane”—connecting the two villages of Was-senaar and Voorschoten, there stood at the time of our story a mansion belonging to the lords of Sandhorst and occupied by a keeper who was at the same time the steward of their estates. With the consent of the owners, who very seldom resided here, the steward was in the habit of renting this mansion—which was known as “the Wyngaerden House”—to families who were desirous of spending the summer in the country. It was a very old building, and, although the owners had frequently been of a mind to pull it down, it remained standing in its dilapidated condition without receiving the benefit of repairs or improvements.

The keeper of Wyngaerden House was a model steward; there was nothing out of which he did not manage to make money. What could be rented he rented; whatever capital he had on hand he put into something that would bring profit. Among other things, he dealt in cloths and linen

goods, in cattle and fruits ; a full assortment of old arms—swords, rapiers, muskets, daggers—was kept on hand by him. The cellar-vaults were a perfect magazine of curiosities and commodities ; in some of them were stored several kegs of gunpowder for the convenience of those who wished to engage in the amusement of the chase.

The steward was some sixty years of age. His hair had grown gray in the service of his masters, as well as in that of the world ; for he acknowledged no God but self-interest, money and his money-chest. At Leyden he had the reputation of a grasping miser. Although he personally conducted most of his affairs, he seldom left home, for fear that some one might enter the house in the mean time and rob him of his treasures. For this reason he had given a part of his mercantile transactions and collections of money in charge of two or three men who traveled around with Joris Ruikmans to offer their master's wares for sale and to bring back the proceeds in safety to the already well-filled chest. Although unmarried, the steward needed the help of a housekeeper or a housemaid, but to avoid paying high wages he had engaged a servant who was a stranger to these parts, and who, on account of her seeming stupidity and awkwardness, could find no one else to engage her services.

On the evening when Joris Ruikmans met Walter Harmsen upon the road to The Hague the

steward was expecting the former with a sum of money from some of his Leyden customers, and it was intended that he should reach the mansion before dark ; we have seen what prevented Joris from reaching the house at the time appointed. Much more concerned about the safety of the money he was conveying than about that of Joris himself, the steward grew uneasy after evening had fallen, and, collecting his laborers, he led them along the Papen road in the direction in which Joris was expected to come ; we have seen that they arrived not a moment too soon.

It was late when the party returned to the mansion. The housemaid, who on the departure of all the men-folks had locked and barred every door because of either her terror or her ignorance, found great difficulty in opening the door, and the party had to wait a long time before they were admitted. The patience of the old miser was completely exhausted, and he roundly scolded the servant for her stupid delay, but the words of her master seemed to make no impression upon her. The light of the torches had no sooner permitted her to discern the features of the prisoner than she uttered a smothered cry which was attributed by the steward to fright.

“Throw that tall rascal in the vault next to the old-iron storeroom,” was the steward’s order. “Fasten a ring about one of his legs ; give him a

handful of straw, some bread and water, and let him spend the night there. There is no grating across the window, but all the better for him : thus he can have more air. Besides, it is only for one night, and he will not be able to break the chain. Away with the villain !”

The laborers seized Herman for the purpose of carrying out the steward's orders. The highwayman made a desperate but fruitless resistance ; he was thrown to the ground and dragged along the stone floor and down the stone steps leading to the cellar. Arrived at the place designated by the steward, he was secured in such a way that escape was hopeless. The housemaid followed the men, apparently in order to light the way ; she carefully marked the spot where the prisoner was secured and took an occasional look at his face, as if to assure herself that she was not mistaken in his identity.

In one of the small apartments on the ground-floor of the dilapidated mansion the steward received little Joris Ruikmans, to obtain from him an account of the money that he was to have delivered to him before evening set in. The two men seated themselves at a table or desk upon which stood a table-lamp but poorly provided with oil or with wick. Upon this desk the steward emptied the contents of the bag which Joris had carried from Leyden, and which had so nearly cost him his life.

"From whom did you get this silver ducat?" asked the steward, weighing the coin on a pair of small scales.

"I believe it was from the brewer on the Rhine dyke," replied Joris. "Is anything the matter with it?"

"I am inclined to think so," said the other. "A silver ducat must fetch eleven and one-half grains, and this does not weigh as much as that."

"That is the fault of the scales," returned Joris. "Do you not see that the brass hooks of the scale-chains are a little twisted?"

"You are right," said the miser, adjusting the chains. "Now it comes out all right. One cannot be too careful nowadays."

The steward placed the coin in an iron chest, with all the pennies, double stivers and shillings which together made up the amount that Joris was to convey to him. Joris was to have received some of this money as his commission for collecting it, the percentage of which had been duly agreed upon before he undertook the work. Having as yet seen no signs of payment, while the steward was on the point of locking the chest he made bold to go to him and tap him on the shoulder before he turned the key.

"What do you want?" asked the steward, hastily and in angry tones.

"I want you to keep your word," returned Joris.

"According to agreement, I am entitled to a payment of two florins * and one shilling."

"'Two florins and one shilling'!" exclaimed the steward, highly indignant. "Do you think I am going to impoverish myself for your sake? I owe you nothing but two double stivers, and these would I gladly give you were it not that I have more than earned this amount by services rendered you."

"'Services rendered me'?" asked Joris, in astonishment, and perceiving with no little anger that the miser was attempting to cheat him out of his honest earnings. "What services have you rendered me?"

"Did I not have to call my men together and burn several torches in order to look you up and deliver you from the hands of highwaymen? If we had not come, you would certainly have been murdered. You see, therefore, that I have saved your life; and surely that is worth more than two double stivers to you?"

The manikin trembled with wrath as he realized with what slyness the miser had kept him working for him for months and was now trying to withhold from him what was honestly his own on this plausible pretext of having saved his life. The steward did not, however, concern himself about this, but was placing the key once more in the lock, when

* A florin is equal to forty American cents; a stiver, two cents; a shilling, five cents.

his arm was violently seized by Joris, who screamed into his ear :

“I will not permit you to lock that chest. You must this instant pay me those two florins and one shilling.”

“I *must*, eh?” answered the miser, tauntingly. “Who do you think you are, you wretched dwarf? ‘*Must*’! If you talk like that, I will give you nothing. I *had* thought of paying you two half stivers, but after this threat you’ll get nothing at all.”

So saying, the steward again turned to lock the chest. But Joris was not to be got rid of so easily; he threw himself upon the chest, seized the key and forced it out of the miser’s hand.

“Ho, ho!” cried the latter. “Is this the way you go to work? Then we will see what a man of my size can do with such a little fellow as you are. Though I am sixty, I think I have strength enough left in my old sinews to get the better of you.”

So saying, the miser wrenched the key from Joris’s hand and lifted him bodily from the floor, and without heeding the dwarf’s struggles or cries he carried him from the apartment and threw him into the hall as if he had been a bag of grain.

“There!” he observed, coolly, not much the worse for this exertion of remarkable strength on the part of a man of his age; “there! Lie there and take some rest; and if you get quieted down,

come to-morrow to my room and perhaps I'll give you those two half stivers."

The steward went back into his room, locked the door, likewise the chest, and, retiring to an adjoining apartment—which was his bedroom—he was soon dreaming blissfully of heaps of money and accumulating possessions.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RING AND THE GIRDLE.

POOR Joris was much dazed by the rough handling he had experienced ; he had no mind to renew his attempts to obtain his money. His head had come into no gentle contact with the wall, and his arms and legs felt as if they had been slightly dislocated. For quite half an hour he remained lying in the position in which he had first reached the floor, but at the end of that time he deemed himself sufficiently restored to his normal condition to be able to lift himself into a sitting posture. Perceiving no light in the steward's room, he crept along upon hands and knees in the darkness, hoping to find a way of leaving the house ; for, though not altogether unacquainted with the interior of the mansion, he was not familiar enough with it to know the way in the dark. Thus creeping along at haphazard, he soon came upon a stone staircase. He recollected that it led down several steps into a vaulted hallway affording egress by a door into the garden. He accordingly descended the steps and began feeling his way along the walls

to avoid the frequent projections of heavy masonry supporting the building. He had not proceeded very far when there appeared at the other end of the hallway the feeble light of a lamp, and he heard the tread of stealthy footsteps. Not wishing to be seen and curious to know who could be moving about these dark subterranean passages at midnight, he pressed his little person into a hollow place in the wall, where he was completely concealed.

While Joris was thus safely hid a person passed by, and ten or twelve paces beyond remained standing before a door.

"Geert Herman!" said this person, whom Joris now recognized to be the steward's housemaid. "Geert Herman!" she called again, pressing her forehead against the door.

"I am here!"

Joris heard this reply in a voice which he plainly recalled as that of the captive highwayman.

"Then I am not mistaken," muttered the housemaid to herself; "this is the place where they have secured him. I shall now find a means of getting at him."

Joris looked earnestly to see what the woman was going to do.

"Can you not reach the door?" she inquired, putting her mouth close to the keyhole.

"No," answered the prisoner; "I am fastened to the wall with a ring and a chain."

"Good!" muttered the maid, again to herself. "Then I need not fear to enter."

The servant drew from a pocket a few keys, tried one or two, found one that fitted the lock, and soon the door turned squeakingly upon its hinges. Joris crept slowly back till he was opposite the entrance, so as to observe what might take place.

"Geert Herman," said the housemaid, who had gone halfway between the door and the prisoner, "look me closely in the face. Do you not know me?" She lifted the lamp to a level with her face, so that its full light fell upon her.

"Aalt," stammered the robber, "of Steenwyk!"

"Right! You did not think you would meet me here, but I knew you hailed from somewhere in this region, though I could not discover your precise whereabouts. And now do you understand why I left Steenwyk to come here, and why I have endured the shameful maltreatment of the steward in the hope that some time or another I might come across your path?"

The prisoner did not reply, but Joris observed that he put his right hand into a breast-pocket, as if he felt for something he would rather hide.

"And you fully comprehend what I want of you, Geert Herman," said the servant, approaching a step nearer. "I have it in my power to give you

your liberty. Look !” she continued, showing him a file. “With this I can deliver you from this imprisonment.”

“My leg is so wounded with knife-cuts that I could not get away,” said Geert Herman, as if looking for an excuse.

“I will give you linen with which you may bind your wounds and moisten them with water,” rejoined the woman; and, suiting the action to the words, she tore a piece off her apron.

“Give me that tool—that file,” commanded Geert.

“In return for two articles,” replied the housemaid.

“And what are they ?” asked Herman ; but from his manner it was evident that he well knew what she meant.

“The ring and the girdle.”

“No,” replied Geert, and he felt once more in his pocket ; “I cannot give you these. The first may be of use to me some time, and the girdle will—”

“But you *shall* give them to me,” rejoined the girl, decisively.

“I do not let myself be commanded by a woman like you !”

“But that woman will go to Leyden this very night and call on Mr. Loth Huyghens Gael, the sheriff.”

"He cannot prove anything against me," said the prisoner. "I will myself become the accuser if the steward complains against me. None can prove that I have stolen anything, or even have stopped any one on the highway."

"You need not fear that the steward will make a complaint against you," remarked the woman, dryly. "He has no relish, as you know, to fall under the notice of the sheriff. Still, I can keep him from letting you go."

"You?"

"Yes, I. You know well enough that I have money, and the steward will do anything for money. For money he would even let you die here of starvation, and, should that be done, these walls will never tell of it."

The prisoner shuddered; he knew that the steward was quite capable of this.

"Therefore you had better give me the ring and the girdle," continued the housemaid. "In return I will set you at liberty; no one shall ever know what is now passing between us, and I shall never mention your name."

The prisoner reflected a moment:

"I will wait till to-morrow. When the steward comes to me, I will offer him double what you can give him."

"But to-morrow Mr. Gael will be here," said the housemaid, positively.

"I have already told you that I do not fear him," returned Geert.

"Nor yet when he makes you tell him what happened six years ago at Steenwyk?"

Joris could plainly tell from the rattling of the chain that the prisoner was powerfully moved by this home-thrust.

"He can prove nothing," stammered Geert Herman.

"But the sheriff will not come hither alone: Baron Jacob van Marnix and Major Dirk Gapertz will also testify against you. More than all, I will show them the place where the murder occurred; they will dig up the very skeleton—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Herman; and Joris distinctly heard the fellow's voice tremble with consternation.

"You will give me those articles, then?" inquired the woman.

The prisoner seemed to be considering what to do; he muttered something between his teeth. At last he said aloud,

"Undo my chains, Aalt, and I will give you those things."

"Put them down upon that stone," said the housemaid; "there they will remain within your reach, and I will not take them until you have filed through that iron ring."

Geert Herman looked distrustfully at Aalt, and

after considering a little longer he did as she had indicated. A few moments later the ring around Herman's leg was filed through, and he felt himself a free man.

The eyes of both Geert and the woman had been directed all along to the stone where lay the ring and the girdle, and the question now instinctively rose in the mind of each, Who shall be the first to seize them? The moment the chain fell they both threw themselves headlong upon the coveted objects. A fierce struggle now ensued. The woman had the ring already in her hands, when Geert jerked it away from her with such violence that it fell into an opening back of the stone on which it had been laid.

"Give me the girdle!" cried the housemaid, in smothered tones, lying with her whole weight upon the hand in which the highway-robber held it clutched.

"You shall not have it!" exclaimed Geert Herman, straining with all his might to release his hand.

For some moments the two continued to struggle for the possession of the girdle. The woman, despairing of securing it in any other way, now sought to let it drop into the same hole into which the ring had fallen. With one quick jerk she succeeded in effecting this. The robber now made a backward movement to release himself from the

hands of the housemaid, but, hitting his foot against a stone, he fell on his back, upsetting the lamp in his fall and involving the whole cell in profound darkness.

Joris thought that now it was time for him to get away from this place, and accordingly he crept back to his recess in the wall. At the same time a noise was heard in the apartment of the steward. The first glimpses of the dawn became visible in the east, and, although Joris could not see what was taking place in the cell, he plainly heard Geert Herman climbing up through the window and running away from the house.

“I shall have to get out the same way,” reflected Joris, while the noise overhead increased. “It is a pity that I do not know the exact spot where those articles have fallen; I might make some good use of them.”

A few moments later, and the dwarf heard the heavy tread of the steward; and, fearing that he might be accused of having lent a hand in the escape of the highwayman, he now hastily proceeded to take advantage of the same means of egress from the mansion.

Scarce had Joris gone when the steward entered the cell with a lamp.

“So the robber has made his escape?” he muttered. “Why did he not wait till morning? I would not have brought him before the sheriff.

Those things cost money, and a poor man such as I am cannot spare that. But who assisted him? It must have been Joris. There is no more honesty in this world."

Thus talking to himself, the steward was about to leave the cell and return to his room, when he became aware of the presence of the housemaid, whom he had not at first noticed, owing to the feeble light given by his lamp.

"Ah!" he said, taking her in no very gentle manner by the arm. "Did you make this disturbance during the night? Did you make common cause with this highwayman? I will soon show you where the door is."

As the miser spoke he picked up the girl as if she had been a child, carried her to the end of the hallway, opened the door and thrust her out without paying any attention to the remonstrances which she addressed to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEALER IN FINE LINEN EXPLAINS HIMSELF.

JUST outside of the pleasantly-situated village of Wassenaar, at the place where begins the lane leading to the country-seat Duinrel, there stood at the time of our story a dwelling belonging to the wagonmaker Ledeganck. This man was known throughout that region for his sincere and upright Christian character. He did not belong to that class of people—of whom there were so many at that time—who make a great noise and display about their religious zeal, but with such gifts of grace as he possessed he modestly and quietly labored for the extension and edification of the Church of Christ.

Wassenaar, as we have already said, was one of those villages in the vicinity of Leyden where the preaching of a spiritual gospel had met with especial favor and success. This was particularly due, as we likewise before remarked, to the wholesome influence exerted by colonies of Christians from England and Scotland who had found a refuge in

Holland and had settled in the city of Leyden. When the celebrated John Robinson and his followers—part of whom afterward went to America and became the so-called Pilgrim Fathers of the American republic—settled in Leyden, about the year 1608 or 1609, they found English worship already established in the city and a Presbyterian congregation organized, with a regular pastor and worshiping in a church set apart by the courtesy of the magistrates of Leyden for their exclusive use. By their practices and preaching these English or Scotch Presbyterians opened the eyes of many sincere Christians to the dangers of mere formalism and to the deadening influence of the State-Church system. The consequence was that assemblies and conferences were instituted with the view of promoting purity of doctrine and building up each other in their most holy faith, but, above all, aiming to bring the gospel to the attention of as many people as possible. The gatherings in the neighborhood of Wassenaar were usually held every Sunday afternoon at the house of the wagonmaker Ledeganck, who was a warm friend of Walter Harmsen. The preaching of Harmsen had led many in this region to the knowledge and experience of salvation. Great was the affection which was felt for Walter, and therefore it was with no little satisfaction that the inhabitants of Wassenaar had learned that after an absence of

some duration he would once more spend an afternoon and an evening in their midst. Expecting a great concourse of people, Ledeganck had extemporized in his garden a sort of shed which could accommodate quite a number of hearers.

Let us, then, follow the crowds that are filling this rude structure, and closely observe what is going on about us. The sundial indicated nearly four o'clock. It was a beautiful, mild Sabbath afternoon, and, although the appointed hour had not yet arrived, the frail wooden temple back of Ledeganck's house was already more than full. People of all sorts and of all conditions had flocked together in this place. Here would be noticed the peasantry in their best Sunday garments; there, the servants of the neighboring nobility in their handsome liveries. Scattered among the audience sat fishermen and women from Katwyk, with here and there a sturdy forester, and mingling pleasantly with these ruder surroundings could be seen the innocent countenances of the village maidens of Wassenaar by the side of their staid and comfortable-looking mothers. A plain table stood at the farther end of the shed, and in front of this table lay a great block of wood evidently intended to furnish an elevated standing-place for the speaker.

Not far from the table was seated a lady having beside her a fourteen-year-old girl whose dress, though severely plain and chaste, nevertheless ex-

pressed the high rank to which the two belonged, though the indescribable air that high breeding and elegant society inevitably impress upon the manners and the person still more unmistakably indicated their high rank. They were the Lady Veronica and her daughter, Walburg. On the countenance of each was easily to be read the deep satisfaction which she felt in being here and in the expectation of hearing something to her edification. Next to Walburg was seated a man who at the first glance could be recognized as being or as having been in the army of the republic. The chances of war had deprived him of his right leg, which had been amputated below the knee, and many an honorable scar gave proof that he had found the war with the Spaniards a serious business. He carried on an occasional whispered conversation with Walburg, and one not too far removed from them could have heard the latter address him as "major."

All eyes begin to turn to the door through which the evangelist is expected to enter. Just before the appointed time it is opened, and Ledeganck, followed by Walter Harmsen, enters the wooden tent. The former seats himself not far from Lady Veronica, and Walter takes his stand upon the block of wood, offers a short and simple prayer of invocation and announces for singing a few verses of a psalm of the Dathenus collection.*

* A word as to these psalms may not be out of place nor

During the singing Walter allowed his eyes to rove over the multitude in search of familiar faces. With particular anxiety he sought for a person whom he greatly wished to see among his audience, but he looked in vain along the several rows of seats, and even among the people standing, until through the wide space at the opposite end of the tent there entered the man in question. It was none other than the little Joris Ruikmans, but he was not alone: he was accompanied by a woman who was tall enough to have carried him on her arm.

without interest. Dathenus was one of the earliest and the boldest field-preachers who might ever be charged with too great a fierceness in the attacks upon Romanism. From the French versification of Marot and Beza he translated the Psalms of David into Dutch rhyme. In 1574, at the first synod held within the republic, this version of the Psalms was directed to be sung in the Reformed churches of Holland. As already mentioned, St. Aldegonde published his versification of the Psalms in 1591. He drew his inspiration directly from the original language. He wielded a poet's pen, and yet the rude second-hand rhymes of the fierce field-preacher continued to be the authorized psalms for the worship of song until the year 1773, when by commission of the States-General a much-needed change was effected, and a collection of rhymed Psalms was made and authorized to be used; this collection contained some very fine specimens of Dutch poetry. Hence, at a public service such as we are describing, held in the year 1598, though it was of so free and uneclesiastical a character, it is not strange that we encounter the version of Dathenus instead of that of St. Aldegonde, because the people were more generally familiar with the former.

Harmsen surmised at once that this was the man-ikin's wife; his surmise gained strength when he noticed that the woman held by the hand a boy about nine years of age. The little fellow seemed to have but small inclination to go into the shed with his foster-parents, nor was he to be pacified or reconciled to the idea of doing so until the woman had bent down and whispered something in his ear, and, having lifted him up, had pointed in the direction where the major and the Lady Walburg were seated. Joris busied himself endeavoring to secure a seat, but, not succeeding, he left this to his wife, who managed with better success, landing between two farming-people and appropriating a seat for herself and her foster-child. Joris took up his position back of them, partially leaning upon his wife's shoulder, thus obtaining a good opportunity for observing the audience.

The singing being ended, Walter offered another fervent prayer, asking the assistance of the Holy Spirit, opened the Bible which lay upon the table, and announced the text which would form the basis for his remarks. The words were these: "And to her [the Lamb's wife] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." After a brief introduction explaining the connection of the text, Walter told the people that he had come among them to open the market of free grace. He

was a merchant—or, rather, the agent of a merchant—commissioned by a great and rich King, the King of heaven and earth. He had brought with him the goods which were at the disposal of his Lord, and which he was appointed to sell: these goods were of “fine linen,” which is “the righteousness of saints.” But “the righteousness of saints” is identical with the righteousness of Christ, in so far as it is a justifying righteousness.

Next, Harmsen went on to declare what was the nature and what were the virtues of this “fine linen;” he called attention to the fact that there was nothing upon earth that could equal this linen in quality, purity, strength or beauty; that it was highly expedient that his hearers should all seek to be possessed of this fine linen in the way that Scripture itself recommended—by “buying” it. If they did not do so, it must be for either of two reasons—that they were not in need of it, or that they had no money. But the goods which he wished to recommend every one most pressingly needed. He who did *not* possess the fine linen might well be considered naked, blind, miserable and to be greatly pitied. Without that fine linen about the person none was permitted nor should dare to appear before God. But possibly there were some there present who would be glad to purchase, but were without money? Whosoever was in such a case must understand that the market of which he was

speaking might with justice be called the free market of God's grace, since these goods which he was holding up for sale in the name of Him who sent him were obtainable altogether without money and without price. Those who insisted upon giving something of this kind for their possession might as well depart at once, for such could not in this way purchase the fine linen.

"Now, then," Walter said, in conclusion, "is there no one here who will purchase this fine linen of me? Must I go back to my Lord and say, 'Lord, many came together to be present at the gospel services, many appeared at the market of free grace, but no one would believe that he was a poor sinner and lacked the robe of righteousness; no one would believe that he stood in need of thy righteousness, and that he might purchase this without money and without price only by a hearty and sincere faith in Christ'? Shall I report thus to my Lord? Will you return as you came—poor, wretched, blind, halt, naked? I ask you once more: Will no one here buy this fine linen? Does none here hunger after the righteousness of Christ?"

The evangelist ceased speaking. The entire audience seemed to be deeply impressed.

"Mother," whispered Walburg in Lady Veronica's ear, "I should gladly shout it out in the hearing of all that with all my heart I desire this fine linen."

“Do you not already possess it, child?” answered Lady Veronica, equally low. “Did you not bend your knees with me this morning and call upon the Lord as *your* Saviour?”

Walburg answered not, but her moistened eyes gave testimony to the depth of feeling within her.

“How beautiful!” whispered Joris to his wife. “I never hear anything like that from my priest.”

“‘Beautiful’?” replied Dame Ruikmans, with difficulty restraining her voice to an undertone, and turning an indignant look upon her husband. “‘Beautiful’? That’s not the word for what you have heard. It is the truth—nothing but the truth. What can you get from your priest? He offers you linen that is torn into shreds.—Be still, Walburgius,” she continued, addressing the boy, who lay half reclining on her lap and seemed a little restless; “it will soon be over, and then we will go home or stay here over-night, as the Lord wills.”

Thus in every direction heads were seen to approach each other, evidently for the purpose of communicating the impression which the address had made. In many an eye glistened a tear and from many a heart rose the unspoken resolution, “I will accept the conditions and buy without money and without price.”

After a brief application and another psalm a concluding prayer of thanksgiving was just about

to be offered by Walter, when a sudden stir occurred among the audience, all eyes being directed to the entrance nearest the speaker, where appeared a man whose forbidding aspect was well calculated to inspire fear. When Joris saw this man, he bent down close to his wife's back, and behind that of the peasant sitting next to her, with what looked very much like a desire to hide himself.

"Wife," he said, "there he is."

"Who?" she inquired.

"Geert Herman, the cloth-weaver, who escaped this night from the Wyngaerden House, and of whom I have been telling you."

"But I hope you are not afraid of him?" she said, reproachfully, and whispering, so as not to disturb her neighbors. "You are safe here. Besides, he did not see you in the cell."

"Yes, but why is he here? Look! that one-eyed Fleming stands by his side now. They must have their eye on us."

In spite of the disturbance caused by the appearance of these formidable characters, the evangelist, who in the course of his labors had encountered far worse interruptions than this, had quietly gone on with his prayer of thanksgiving. Having concluded this, he dismissed the assembly, and the people began to scatter. Ledeganck and Walter Harmsen went to the former's house, followed by the major, Lady Veronica and Walburg, and a few

friends who were to spend the evening at Ledeganck's.

Geert Herman and his confederates had left the village with the dispersing multitude and retired to their rendezvous in the neighboring sandhills. There they continued a long time in consultation. When they separated, Geert Herman alone took the road leading to the wagonmaker's house.

Joris waited till the great crowd had dispersed, and then went to Ledeganck's house, where he hoped to find a safe refuge in the vicinity of the relatives of Lord St. Aldegonde. In this hope he was not disappointed, for Walburg was greatly rejoiced to see the major's ward and her namesake. But Joris could not gain access to the evangelist to confide to him certain matters which oppressed his mind, for Walter Harmsen was too constantly held in conversation about various matters by surrounding friends. Joris, however, obtained permission from Ledeganck to stay over-night at his house. Our manikin could not get out of his mind the appearance of those two highwaymen at the door of the shed. What could have been their design? Whither had they gone? There could be no question that they were hatching mischief, and with ever-greater force the conviction grew upon him that this mischief had something to do with little Walburgius. The few words dropped from the mouth of Bardes when he was taunting

Geert Herman, together with the housemaid's dark hints, seemed to have but one interpretation.

While Walter Harmsen was still busily engaged in conversation with his friends, one of Ledeganck's workmen entered the room with the announcement that in the shed there was some one who was desirous of having an interview with Mr. Harmsen.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CABIN IN THE SANDHILLS.

“**W**HO is it, Hein?” inquired Ledeganck of his man.

“I cannot say, master. I don’t think I know the man, and, at any rate, it was too dark to tell how he looked.”

“But how is he dressed, Hein? Is he an old or a young man?” inquired Ledeganck.

“He is dressed like a burgher, but poorly. I should say he must be rather old, for he is much bent and leaned heavily upon his stick.”

“Let the man come in,” said Walter, whose heart was filled with pity, as he judged that it might be a person who had been aroused by the preaching and wanted to converse about his soul.

“I have told him to do so already, Mr. Harmen,” said the laborer, “but he wishes to see you privately.”

“I shall go,” said Walter; and he rose to follow the man into the shed, but Walburg took his hand and held him back.

“What do you wish, dear?” inquired Walter.

"I am so afraid that there is some one out there who wants to do you harm," said the little maiden, with evident concern.

"He who is under the protection of the Most High need fear no evil. You will see me come back in a moment; then we will all go home together."

"But I am so afraid. Cannot you take some one along?"

"Shall I, then, place my confidence in man rather than in God? Compose yourself, dear; I shall return immediately."

These words had been exchanged mostly in whispers overheard by none except Lady Veronica, who without giving expression to it shared her daughter's apprehension, especially since Joris had informed her that two highway-robbers had stood at the entrance of the shed just before the close of the meeting. She communicated this circumstance to Walter, who set her mind at ease by calling her attention to Hein's description, from which it appeared that this was a feeble old man who wished to converse with him. Walter pressed little Walburg's hand once more, and then left the house.

Meantime, it had grown nearly dark, and, as the shed was intended for use only in the daytime, it did not admit the feeble twilight that still reigned outside. It was with some difficulty that the evangelist found his way among misplaced and overturned benches and reached the place where the

stranger was awaiting him. Hein certainly was not deceived in the man's appearance, for Walter found him veritably bent down beneath the burden of years. He approached him and said in a kindly manner,

"What is it you wish with me, old man?"

"Are you not the preacher who a little while ago spoke in this shed and gave utterance to such edifying words?" inquired the aged one, in trembling accents.

Walter was rejoiced to hear these words; they banished from his heart whatever suspicions he had permitted it to harbor in deference to the fears of Walburg and her mother. Assured now that some one had come to him who wished to purchase the fine linen he had freely offered to needy souls, he replied,

"Yes, aged friend; I am the same. Do you desire enlightenment? Do you wish to speak with me about the Lord? Come with me into the house; there are several more who have an interest in their eternal salvation."

"I thank you, I thank you, worthy sir," replied the old man; and he nodded his head several times, as many old and feeble persons are apt to do. "I thank you, but I must tell you that I have not come to you so much on my own account as for my son. That poor boy suffers from a painful malady, and one of your audience has been telling him so

much of what you said that he has conceived a great longing to converse with you personally."

"Where is he? Where is he?" inquired Walter, eagerly. "I shall go to him without delay."

"He is not far from here; we live in a small cabin situated a little way among the sandhills. Oh, if you only knew how greatly he longs to see you! I could not resist his request to summon you, but am come, in spite of my years and my difficulty in traveling, in the hope that you might heed our request."

"Most gladly, friend," exclaimed Walter, wrapping his cloak about his shoulders. "I am ready to go with you at once."

"But it is nearly dark, worthy sir," said the old man. "Will you not take a lantern with you?"

"It is not at all necessary to do so, aged friend," rejoined Walter. "Surely you know the way? Let us proceed; every moment that we delay may be hurtful to your son. Give me your arm, friend; then you can lean on me, and we can get along so much the better;" and, offering his arm to the old man, he insisted upon going at once. In his zeal to serve others in the things of Christ, Walter forgot that there were those in the house to whom he would occasion great anxiety by any prolonged absence.

The way was not long, but was difficult because of the deep sand. The old man seemed to find it

particularly so, especially when a sandhill had to be climbed. But finally they stood before a sort of cabin constructed out of various old and rude materials. No light shone from within, and it would have been impossible for Walter to have found a living creature within it if the old man had not taken him by the hand and led him to a corner of the hut whence he now heard proceeding feeble groans.

Walter Harmsen could not, of course, distinguish the features of the person who uttered these sounds, yet it seemed to him as if they were the expression of anxiety rather than of pain. This conviction grew upon him the longer he listened, and, having had frequent experience of similar cases, he made up his mind to proclaim the gospel to the poor sufferer with all earnestness, trusting that, in spite of the untoward surroundings, the Lord would make it bear fruit sooner or later.

“Do you desire to speak with me?” asked he, after for some time in vain waiting for the sufferer to begin the interview.

A sigh which might be interpreted as an affirmative answer escaped from the person who was lying prostrate on some moss scattered under him upon the floor, while the old man occupied another corner of the apartment and remained standing.

“What is it you wish? Are you ill?” inquired Walter, bending on one knee.

"He is subject to fits," the old man explained ; "and when he comes out of one of these attacks, he is very much exhausted and has much pain. This is now the case with him."

"Is he not able to speak at such a time?" asked Harmsen.

"Sometimes not," was the reply.

At this moment Walter could just discern entering the cabin a third person, who took his place by the side of the old man without saying a word.

"Can you not raise yourself a little?" said Walter to the sufferer ; and, taking him by the arm, he attempted to help the man to a sitting posture, in which effort he succeeded. "Now tell me," continued he, "what you desire of me."

"I have a secret—that oppresses me," began the sufferer, who was evidently speaking with a painful effort.

"What is this secret?" inquired Walter.

"I cannot reveal it to you."

"To whom, then, can you do so?"

"To the steward of Wyngaerden House."

"Well, had you not better go to him, then, or ask him to come here?" said Walter, slightly disappointed.

"The first I cannot do, and the second *he* will not consent to do," sighed the sick man.

"What, then, do you wish of me?" asked Walter.

"I will tell you," responded the old man. "He thinks that you more than any one else will be able to persuade the steward to come here. There are certain reasons why he cannot go to the steward, but there is one thing which perhaps will compel the steward to come to him."

"But I have not the least acquaintance with that person," objected Walter.

"That makes no difference," said the old man. "You will shortly have an opportunity of visiting Wyngaerden House, as, according to information that we have obtained, the upper portions of the mansion are to be rented by a French lady of your acquaintance."

"A French lady of *my* acquaintance?" queried Harmsen, not a little wondering that in this wretched cabin his personal friendships seemed to be so well known.

"More than that I do not know about it," rejoined the old man. "But, supposing this to be the fact, would you not be in a condition to use your influence and persuade the steward to visit this cabin?"

"Taking it for granted," Walter replied, "that you have been correctly informed, and that I accede to your request, I still very much doubt whether the steward can be persuaded to come hither, because, as I have heard, he seldom or never leaves home, and certainly not alone."

"He need not come alone," rejoined the other; "he may bring as many of his laborers with him as he pleases, if only we know the day and the hour of his coming."

Walter reflected a moment; it all seemed so mysterious and strange that he did not know what to say. However, once being here, he felt that he must suit himself to the circumstances in carrying out the purpose he had in mind.

"What arguments shall I employ to induce the steward to visit this hut?" he asked.

"St. Luke's—" gasped the sufferer.

"What do you mean by that?" inquired Harm-
sen.

"I believe," the old man continued, "that it is his intention to ask you simply to mention these words to the steward. The eighteenth of this month is St. Luke's day, and the reminder of that date will be sufficient to convince him of the necessity of coming here. Will you do this?"

"I cannot promise you," replied Walter; "but whenever I shall have an opportunity of visiting at Wyngaerden House, I shall mention to the steward that you wished me to ask him to come and see you."

"This was not our intention," observed the man who had last entered the hut, and whose accent betrayed the Fleming.

"What, then, *was* your intention?" asked Wal-

ter, quickly, beginning to suspect that it might be anything but a legitimate one.

“That you should try and persuade the steward to come to this cabin without telling him that you had been here yourself,” was the answer.

“How can I do that?”

“By simply reminding him of St. Luke’s day,” said the same man, somewhat gruffly.

Meanwhile, the sufferer seemed to have regained some of his strength; at least, he gently drew Walter toward him and whispered close in his ear:

“I would so much like to see you alone—when those two are not here.”

“How shall that be done?” whispered Walter, in reply.

“To-morrow afternoon they will not be at home; could you come then? Then we shall be alone.”

“I will try,” answered Walter, struck by the mournful tones of the sufferer’s voice. He concluded from these few words that there really must be something that oppressed his soul of which he would like to make a clean breast, but which he was prevented from doing only by the presence of his two companions.

The whispered conversation, however, excited the suspicions of these men. The man who spoke with the Flemish accent approached the place where the sufferer was lying, and asked in harsh tones,

"Have you said more than was agreed between us?"

"How can you speak so roughly to the poor man?" said Walter. "Do you not know how weak and ill he is?"

"Oh, he will not die of it," said the Fleming, mockingly.

"You do not know that, any more than you know whether you yourself will be living to-morrow."

"Well, and what of that?" said the man.

"What of that'!" said Walter, shocked by these heedless words. "Do you not remember that above us there is a God who hears your reckless language and before whose judgment-seat you will have to stand?"

The Fleming growled between his teeth, and after whispering something to the old man he left the cabin.

"I trust you do not feel as this man does?" said Walter to the sufferer, who had thrown himself back upon the floor.

"I am so afraid!" he sighed.

"With the Lord there are always to be found help and deliverance," Walter assured him. "If you confess your sins to God and take refuge in Jesus Christ, who will be your Saviour, all your fear and anxiety will be taken away. Your sins cannot be so great nor so many but pardon will be

granted you. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin. Will you believe this?"

The sufferer said nothing, but from the pressure of his hand Walter concluded that his words were not unwelcome. He regretted that the sick man had not opened his whole heart to him, but, ascribing this to the reason he had explained to him in whispers, he thought it best not to say much now, and to visit him again on the morrow.

After some more words about the great love of God, who had given to the world his only begotten Son, and after a short prayer, Walter prepared to leave the cabin. The old man offered to accompany him for some distance to show him the way, but Walter declined the offer. He said the night was not so very dark, that he was accustomed to travel among the sandhills, and that he would soon reach Ledeganck's house.

Walter accordingly took his leave, and was soon on his way to the village. He was not yet halfway from it when he heard voices calling out in several directions. He plainly distinguished his own name, and, conjecturing that his friends had grown uneasy about his long absence and were now searching for him, he called back to them. A few minutes later, and Ledeganck and two of his men came up with him, expressing their joy at his safety.

"We have all been in great anxiety about you,"

said the former. "We were every moment expecting you to re-enter the room; but when you did not come, we ventured to intrude upon your interview with the stranger. When we came into the shed, you were nowhere to be seen; then all sorts of fears rose up within us, and we have been everywhere looking for you. At last we fortunately met some one who had seen two men leave the village for the sandhills. Has harm befallen you?"

"None at all, friend Ledeganck," replied Walter. "I am grateful for your zeal, but you know it is written, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.'"

CHAPTER X.

A LETTER FROM ABROAD.

THE remainder of the Sabbath evening was spent by Walter Harmsen and his friends at the house of Ledeganck. The time fled rapidly as prayer succeeded prayer; the exchange of happy experiences of the Lord's goodness and the Saviour's love was delightful and comforting, while the little gathering frequently burst forth into some psalm or spiritual song spontaneously suggested by the drift of the conversation.

Walter sought occasion to have with Joris Ruikmans a private conference, at which Joris's wife was present. Joris told him of his experiences after they separated on the previous evening. As they were about to part Walter said,

"Well, Joris, was I not right in telling you that I was a dealer in fine linen, and that such goods are best offered for sale on Sunday?"

"You were right, Mr. Harmsen," assented Joris. "I did not know that such wares were to be obtained for nothing; I had never been taught that."

"But you might have known it," interrupted his wife, "if only you had been willing to listen to me or to the precious sermons of our preachers. But you are obstinate and will still heed your priests, who with their idolatries and fables keep you upon the way to perdition.—Ah, worthy sir," she continued, addressing Walter, "you do not know how he grieves me with his continued adherence to the Romish faith.—But this I assure you," turning with sudden heat upon Joris, "that if you bring another popish picture into the house I shall throw it into the fire."

"Hush ! hush ! Compose yourself, Dame Ruikmans," soothingly observed Walter Harmsen. "If you wish to defend our Protestant faith so vigorously, it were best to show that it is a matter of the heart more than one of the head. Scripture directs us to be gentle and meek. Such methods as you propose and follow will not convince your husband of his errors, but will much rather embitter him against the truth. Continue to point him to the love of Jesus ; that will be more efficacious than noise and disputation."

Turning to Joris, Walter continued :

"I hope with all my heart, my friend, that what you have heard this evening may make an abiding impression upon you. Believe me, you can find assurance of salvation in nothing except in the acceptance by a hearty faith of the cross of Christ.

Think more about that than about your temporal anxieties and fears. As to your experience at Wyn-gaerden House, I shall mention your case to the steward as soon as I meet him. I am glad you are very soon to bring your foster-son to Lord St. Aldegonde's house to spend a few days there. I hope to see more of you then, and to have more conversation with you than is now possible about these matters."

Walburg, in the mean time, had found an opportunity for some talk with her little protégé. It caused her great grief to discover how his heart was filled with a longing for his fatherland and his relatives. Gladly would she have been able to assure him that he would soon be restored to them, but she could do no more than encourage him in the hope that her prayers for the fulfillment of these wishes might ere long be answered in a way that could not now be foreseen.

It was at length high time for these Christian friends to separate. Joris and his wife and Walburgius, for fear of the latter's being kidnapped by the highwaymen, were to remain over-night at Ledeganck's house. A wagon with a stout team of horses was held in readiness by the wagonmaker to take Lady Veronica and her daughter, with Walter and the major, to the house of Lord Philip. Walter invited them all to kneel down for a parting prayer, which he requested the major to offer.

Our friends had reached the high-road between The Hague and Leyden, and were just about to turn into it in the direction of the latter city, when the galloping of an approaching horse was heard, and ere long a man on horseback stopped and called out to the servant who preceded the horses with a torch, asking,

“Is the Lady Veronica van Marnix in that wagon?”

“Yes,” replied the servant.

“Did that man call my name?” inquired Lady Veronica.

“Yes, noble lady,” was the reply.

Meantime, the man on horseback had come close to the wagon, and Walburg and her mother recognized in him a peasant who lived near St. Aldegonde's house. He informed them that Lord Philip had requested him to go to Wassenaar and ask Lady Veronica and her daughter to return home as quickly as possible, inasmuch as Baron Jacob had been attacked by sudden illness; the peasant could not inform them precisely as to the nature of the sickness. Having delivered his message, he turned his horse's head, and, putting the spurs to him, he galloped on to let St. Aldegonde know that his children and his guests were on the way to his house. It was a sad ending to a day that had been so happy for Lady Veronica and Walburg.

Baron Jacob, who was subject to lung-troubles, had about seven o'clock in the evening been taken with a violent coughing-spell, causing him to raise much blood. Lord Philip had at once sent to Leyden for the family physician; but when he perceived an increase rather than an abatement of the distress, he felt that the wife and the daughter should at once be sent for also. When they entered the sick-room, the doctor had been there, and had left again after prescribing and administering some medicines and giving strict orders not to allow the patient to hold conversation with any one. Lord Philip, who forgot his own sufferings while ministering to his son, sat by the side of the bed, keeping his eyes fixed upon the sick man's countenance and fearing that another attack might occur at any moment and perhaps prove to be the last. Without speaking, as the wife and daughter entered all three sank upon their knees by the bedside and poured forth their hearts in silent prayer. The patient, however, remained undisturbed by any further attacks that evening, the soothing medicines having wrought a happy effect.

After an hour's watching, Lord Philip left his son to the care of Lady Veronica and Walburg and went to welcome his guests, the major and Walter Harmsen, who had refrained from intruding themselves upon the family group in the sick-chamber. The aged statesman greeted them cor-

dially and expressed himself much comforted by their presence.

"How little it takes to bring a person to the brink of the grave!" he remarked. "Let but the breath fail a moment, and the strongest man is no more."

"Does there seem less danger than at first?" inquired the major.

"I am still greatly in fear of the worst, but am not without hope," replied St. Aldegonde. "Much do I wish that my son may survive me. Still, if I must bear this disappointment and great grief, the Lord will strengthen me; and his will be done!"

"Esteemed sir," spoke Walter Harmsen, "your words are worthy of your Christian faith. I do indeed trust—yea, know—that if God should take your son from you he would give you abundant strength to drink that bitter cup to its dregs. A Christian ever experiences the consolation and the nearness of his Father in heaven according to his need. Where others would have cause for despair he is supported."

"Your observation is very true, friend Harmsen," returned St. Aldegonde. "Never was I more greatly tried than when I lost the dearest friend I ever had upon earth. It is now more than fourteen years since that memorable tenth of July, in 1584, when the hand of an assassin took the precious life of William the Silent. With what a fear-

ful shock the news of this event overwhelmed me you may well imagine, for you know how closely we were bound to each other. In the first moments I rebelled against God, for not only had I lost my beloved personal friend, but the State had lost its head and hand and the people had lost a father. What was to become of all the labors, toils, sacrifices, sorrows, of many painful years? It seemed as if there could be no wise and loving Providence overruling the destinies of men, for how could he have permitted such a dastardly murder and so disastrous a misfortune to the cause of liberty and religion? But I was led by the Spirit to better and wiser thoughts. I reflected that if God had struck the blow he would apply the healing balm—that out of this seeming wreck and ruin of Holland's hopes he could bring glorious results. And he has indeed done so. But I thanked God even then that he gave me these better thoughts and stopped my rebellious murmuring, for it was very sinful and destructive of all comfort.”

The physician made a second visit, bringing other medicines. He pronounced the patient out of immediate danger, but recommended great care. Accordingly, Lady Veronica insisted that Lord Philip and his guests should retire, while she, with one of the servants, remained to watch by Baron Jacob's side and to administer the cordials at the appointed times.

Thus temporarily relieved from anxiety, the aged father consented to repair to his bedchamber, after conducting Walter and Major Gapertz to theirs. They had been in this room but a little time when a housemaid knocked at the door and handed Walter a letter, saying that it had been brought to the house late in the afternoon by some one from Leyden. Harmsen at once recognized the handwriting as that of Lady Jacoba van Vlooswyk. Having opened the letter and run over its contents, he ascertained that, as he had supposed from her former writing, and from her announcement to Walburg, she was now on her way to her fatherland. The letter was dated at Brussels, where she was to stop several days to recover from the fatigue of her journey from France, but she would leave that city so as to reach The Hague about the middle of October.

After gathering this gratifying information from a hasty glance over the many pages, Walter told his friend of it, and then went over the letter more carefully, occasionally reading portions of it to the major. The epistle contained many interesting particulars about the father of Lady Jacoba, her encounters on the journey, and her expected visit to the land of her fathers after so many years. A great part of it was devoted to the expression of her gratitude to God and of her joy in the growing experiences of the Christian life. At one place she wrote as follows :

“ I find the journey much more fatiguing than I had supposed, and I certainly would not have persevered so far had not my desire been so strong to meet you and many other friends. Yet the Lord has been my Helper in this as in so many other things. Indeed, his guidance has been quite remarkable in one particular. At a certain stage of the journey I was taken sick, and was compelled for a few days to cease traveling. This was in the southern part of Flanders, near the city of Courtrai. It was a great disappointment to me, but the Lord turned it into an occasion of great joy. I was entertained by a lady who was in circumstances of peculiar affliction, and who stood in great need of the consolations of the gospel. But there was other help which I believed I could render her. Of this I will tell you nothing now, because everything is in uncertainty; but you may render me much aid when I am come to The Hague. I have persuaded her to accompany me, and she will arrive at the same time with myself. On this account I do not feel at liberty to avail myself of the hospitality of little Walburg’s parents or grandfather, but would ask you to do me a favor. Walburg has written me that Wyngaerden House can be rented by parties visiting the country, and she has caused inquiries to be made there whether my companion and myself can just now be accommodated. The answer having been in the affirmative, may I ask you

to engage these apartments for my Flemish friend and myself, with our suite of attendants and servants? Pray do so at once on receipt of this, lest otherwise it be too late. I long to meet Walburg and her relatives; she must be a lovely girl, and certainly is remarkably advanced in her Christian experience, though it is entirely child-like, withal. It will be both an honor and a delight to me to make the familiar acquaintance of her distinguished grandfather. His name is one ever mentioned with reverence and esteem in the Huguenot circles in France with which father and I come in contact."

Walter Harmsen and his friend read these and other portions of the letter with the keenest interest and enjoyment. The major expressed his delight at the evidences of rich spiritual experience where-with it abounded.

"I may well say," he observed at the close, "that the pupil has given her teacher no cause to be ashamed of her."

"Say, rather, dear Dirk, that she is an apt scholar of the Holy Ghost himself. Let us pray the Lord that nothing may hinder her further progress, and that she may soon be safe and happy in our midst."

"What can she mean by the allusion to the Flemish lady and her peculiar circumstances?" wondered the major.

“I know no more about it than you do, major. She has never before alluded to this woman in any of her letters, for, as you noticed, she met her for the first time on this journey.”

After some further conversation to which the contents of the letter or the sickness of the baron gave occasion, the friends retired to rest with fervent prayers for the recovery of their host's son and the safe arrival of Lady Vlooswyk.

CHAPTER XI.

*AT THE SIEGE OF STEENWYK.**

WE now need to take a brief look at what had happened in the political affairs of the Dutch republic during the twenty years which we have added to the lives of some of the characters in our tale.

The great event of the year 1579, when we took leave of our friends, was the Union of Utrecht, which bound the seven provinces of the North into a confederacy for the defence of their civil liberties against Spanish tyranny and the maintenance of their liberty of conscience against the spiritual assumptions of the papal Church. The next event of importance was the formal and final abjuration of the king of Spain. Strange to say, although they had revolted against his authority and fought the armies he had sent to subdue them, yet by a sort of legal fiction his sovereignty over the provinces as hereditary lord had been all along acknowledged. It was supposed to be his governors and generals who were at fault and who were

* This chapter is interpolated by the translator.

seeking to oppress the people, and whom, therefore, in the interest of and in obedience to the king, the provinces were opposing ; but this fiction was at last wiped out, and the frank and straightforward issue boldly taken that the king of Spain had forfeited his sovereignty over the united provinces, and that his authority must be abjured. This was done in the year 1581.

On the 10th of July, 1584, a tremendous calamity befell the republic. More than one had been excited by the price set upon the head of the prince of Orange by the king of Spain ; such were assured by Jesuitical priests that to rid the world of so great a heretic and rebel would be an act meritorious in the eyes of God and productive to the perpetrator of immediate entrance to heaven without the intervening purgatory if he should fail or perish in the attempt. At last a poor fanatic succeeded in winning the confidence of the prince and in a moment when no such danger was expected shot him through the heart, so that he died almost immediately. The country was plunged in universal, paralyzing grief. For a while all hope of success in the struggle for independence seemed gone. Who would take up the work which none had done so well, so bravely, so disinterestedly, as he who lay dead ? But the States-General resolved to keep up the noble conflict, and the spirit of the murdered patriot survived in the hearts of the people.

All eyes turned at first to the queen of England, the greatest of Protestant sovereigns, but for three years the provinces experienced little benefit and much vexation from the assistance which the republic succeeded in obtaining from her for their sacred cause. She sent the earl of Leicester into the country as her representative ; but when, after much blundering, many disgraceful intrigues and repeated failures on the field of battle, the queen was compelled to recall her incapable favorite, the Hollanders were so rejoiced that medals were struck in memory of the happy release.

It was not until after the English assistance—or, rather, interference with the affairs of the republic of the United Netherlands—had been withdrawn that another scion of the house of Orange rose to prominence in the cause of Dutch freedom. This was Prince Maurice, the son of the illustrious William the Silent. He soon displayed extraordinary abilities as a military commander, attaining an unrivaled reputation throughout Europe for his skill in conducting sieges, the celerity of his marches and the genius wherewith he knew how to turn to account the critical moments of the battlefield.

The siege of Steenwyk was among the earliest of Prince Maurice's famous achievements. It is to be remembered that the United Netherlands consisted of but seven provinces. The original seventeen that in 1576 had entered into the compact

called the "Pacification of Ghent" had dwindled down to these few, situated in the North. The ten southern provinces, which had not given their adherence to the Reformed faith, had fallen away from their bold stand of resistance to Spanish oppression, and had returned to obedience and submission, followed by most ruinous consequences to their prosperity. But the Spaniards had not been completely driven from their footing in the North; the province of Gronigen was held by the Spanish governor Verdugo, and many a stronghold in these eastern portions of the republic was in the hand of Spain. Among these strongholds was the city of Steenwyk, in the north-west corner of the province of Overijssel, near the borders of the two provinces of Drenthe and Friesland. It was an important place. It commanded the provinces named; and if it could be secured by the republican forces, the province of Gronigen would eventually have to be vacated by the enemy. In the summer of 1591, Prince Maurice appeared before its walls, but an invasion of Gelderland by the Spaniards forced him to abandon the siege. A second time he invested the city, and now he persevered till its reduction was accomplished. On the 28th of May, 1592, the siege was recommenced, and it lasted thirty-seven days, the capitulation and surrender taking place on the 3d and 4th of July respectively.

Mention has already been made in a former chap-

ter of an attempt on the part of the Spanish governor of Groningen, General Verdugo, to throw a reinforcement into the place during the progress of the siege, and that on this occasion was captured the child which Major Gapertz had adopted, and which had gone since that time by the name of Walburgius Steenwyk. We will need now to relate somewhat more in detail the circumstances of that capture, which were unknown to his benefactors.

The body of troops which Verdugo sought to introduce into Steenwyk numbered about three hundred men, but they were accompanied by a train of wagons containing much-needed provisions and ammunition. A few of the officers were attended by their wives and families. It was thought that this body could easily enter the city, as its preparation and movement had been kept a profound secret, and as the prince of Orange could not prevent its entrance if it came upon him by surprise. But intercepted letters told the prince the whole story and informed him of the small numbers of the relieving force. To Jacob of Marnix and Major Gapertz was entrusted the duty of heading off this force. Considering the smallness of the numbers on either side, one of the most sanguinary conflicts of the war ensued between these two detachments. Of the three hundred on the Spanish side, but sixty or seventy men succeeded in entering the city, and the rest were killed or taken prisoners. The

major was severely wounded, and Baron Jacob received the injury which had made him an invalid ever since.*

Among the officers of the relieving body was a young Flemish gentleman who was accompanied by his wife and his child. In the battle just mentioned he was seriously wounded, but was carried into the city by his comrades. In the confusion and terror of the conflict his wife had become separated from the nurse who had charge of the little boy. In such a moment search for any one was impossible. The young wife and mother was hurried along by those fleeing with her; she found a place of refuge beyond the reach of the patriot troops.

The nurse met with a different fate. She fondly pressed the child to her bosom, and after running wildly in the first direction that offered she found that she was left more and more to herself, until none of her companions in flight remained with her. At the same time she discovered not far from her the ruins of an old mill whose upper portions seemed to have been shot away by the artillery of besiegers and besieged, but whose solid stone walls nearer the ground seemed to offer a good refuge. Accordingly, she hastened her steps, hoping that no missile might cut her off from this place of safety, and that she might thus preserve the life of her charge;

* What follows is worked up from a brief hint by the author in Chapter XIX.

her wish was realized thus far, at least. She reached the ruins, but found that some one had been before her—a man in the uniform of a soldier, but not really such. One of those despicable characters who take advantage of the misfortunes of war to make more wretched those already sufficiently overcome by its calamities ; a villain who would rob the slain and would not hesitate to despatch the wounded to secure plunder,—such a man was hiding among the ruins. He had watched the approach of the woman with the child ; he at once saw that the child belonged to parents of a rank in life superior to that of the woman, and surmised that there must be valuables about the dainty garments of the boy. As soon as the woman had come within the shelter of the stone walls he rudely accosted her and demanded the child from her ; she refused to surrender it. Without the least compunction the wretch struck her with the weapon he carried, and—whether intentionally or not—with such force that she dropped dead to the ground.

It might place the murderer in an awkward position if this murder were traced to him, for this was not the actual field of battle ; accordingly, he hastily dug a hole in the loose, sandy ground and hid the body. Scarcely had he done this when he heard the approach of a body of men ; he fled from the ruins, and soon a number of soldiers of the relieving party entered the walls. They had dis-

covered the mill and deemed it would afford them opportunity for turning at bay against their pursuing enemies ; but after a gallant resistance, finding their ammunition lessening and being cut off from all supplies, they surrendered and were taken prisoners, the child with them. None of the soldiers knew of the child's origin or how it came there. They were Spanish troops, and, as the women and the children had followed in the rear of the soldiers, they knew nothing of the Flemish officer's wife or child. Thus it was that Major Gapertz could discover no trace of the child's parentage and resolved to make it his ward.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERIOUS REMINDER ONCE MORE.

THE next morning found the household at St. Aldegonde's country-seat much relieved from the anxiety occasioned by Baron Jacob's serious illness of the previous day. The patient passed a restful night, with no return of the coughing.

Very early in the morning Walter Harmsen set out to visit certain families that needed his personal and private ministrations either by reason of sickness or from other causes, and now felt that he had at the Wyngaerden House an errand which would give him a good opportunity to fulfill the wishes of the sick man in the sandhills. Leaving the house, he leisurely walked down the long lane between the beeches, accompanied by Walburg, to whom he related some of the contents of Lady Jacoba's letter, to the girl's no little delight. Arrived at the road, Walter turned to the left, and after walking some distance entered a side-path leading into a piece of woods skirting the road. This before long brought him to a small dwelling occupied by one of the peasants who farmed some lands belonging

to a nobleman of the vicinity ; the peasant's wife had been seriously ill for several weeks. When Walter reached the yard, no one was in sight ; for the peasant had gone to town and his hired-men were in the field. Walter, however, had been here more than once, and knew the way ; therefore, opening the door, he was soon in the room where lay the sufferer. There was very little light in the apartment ; part of the small windows were still covered by the blinds, and one window was in the wall which separated the house from the barn. After waiting to observe whether or not the patient was aware of his presence, Walter ventured to say as softly as possible, so as not to wake her if she were asleep,

“How are you feeling to-day, Dame Allers?”

There was a movement in the bed ; the woman raised herself into a sitting posture, and, drawing one of the curtains, she said with feeble voice,

“Is that you, Mr. Harmsen ? I am very happy to see you. The gracious Lord has surely sent you to me.”

“How are you now, dear friend?” repeated Walter.

“I have all night been unable to sleep,” she answered, “but I have had great comfort from the thoughts that came to me. I was led to reflect upon the words you spoke to me during your last visit. Ever more fully from day to day I know what it

means that Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

"I am very glad to hear it, Dame Allers," said Walter. "We must come to Christ as we are—a broken and contrite heart he will not despise—but we must come believing, and not doubting."

"No, indeed, not doubting. As long as I doubted, I was in trouble; but when the Lord gave me faith, all fear was taken away."

"Are you now perfectly at rest and happy?" inquired Walter, laying a slight stress on the word "perfectly."

"As regards my soul, I can say, 'Yes,'" answered the woman. "My body, indeed, is in pain—for I suffered from an exhausting cough—but ere long the Lord will dissolve this earthly tabernacle to give me a dwelling-place with Jesus. I trust, however, that the Lord will spare me long enough to let me realize the dearest wish which I have upon earth."

"What is this wish?"

"That I may see my eldest son converted," answered the woman. "Duik is such a reckless fellow! He causes us, especially my excellent and pious husband, very great grief. He goes about with all sorts of bad men and lives without a thought of God or his commandments. What must become of him if he continues to go on in the way he is now doing?"

“Where is he at present?” asked Walter, full of sympathy with the unhappy mother.

“I do not know,” she sighed, a severe coughing-spell interrupting her speech. “He wanders all over. Sometimes he is at home, and then, again, he will be absent more than a week. He has been in the army, where he learned very little that was good for him, and where he must have done much for which he was reprimanded; but just what he did I do not know.”

At this instant the window that looked into the barn was slightly raised, and a voice was heard saying in a hoarse whisper,

“Duik! Duik Allers! Are you here?”

As if overcome by a sudden fear, the sick woman seized the hand of Walter and said in undertones,

“This is one of those evil men with whom my son keeps company. Ah! do not leave me now, Mr. Harmsen.”

Walter felt a strange sensation of dread come over him when he heard this voice; it at once reminded him of the man who had spoken so roughly to him on the previous evening in the cabin, and who had given utterance to such shocking irreverence.

Again the voice called, but now somewhat louder, and with the Flemish accent more pronounced:

“Duik! Duik Allers! Come along! We are waiting for you at the corner of the Papen road.”

Walter now rose and went to the window to see who was the speaker. Scarce, however, had the fellow who was in the barn seen Walter when, bending down as if to hide his face, he ran away, muttering to himself,

“What is he doing here? Well, if he comes this evening, he will not feel much like laughing. We shall play him a trick which he will remember for some time.”

When Walter had closed the little window, he noticed in the opposite corner of the room a woman who seemed to have awakened out of a deep sleep, and who was not a little astonished to find a man in the apartment. Walter supposed it was a servant who had been watching with the sick woman, especially because she wore garments suited to such occupation. He was about to address her, when the invalid drew the curtains and asked feebly,

“Is that you, Aalt?”

“Yes, Dame Allers,” replied the person addressed, coming to the side of the bed. “I really believe I fell asleep, but I was so very tired after my walk to The Hague. Can I do anything for you now?”

“Be so kind as to open the window-blinds. My dear husband doubtless thought I was sleeping, and did not wish to disturb me by opening them.”

The servant threw a quick glance at Walter, and went out.

“Who is that servant?” asked Walter. “I do not remember seeing her here yesterday morning.”

“I am but little acquainted with her myself, Mr. Harmsen,” replied the other. “Last night she arrived here very late and told us that she was the housemaid of the steward of Wyngaerden House, and that he had cast her out of doors in a merciless way. My husband, who is kindness itself and knows how cruel and wicked the steward can be, at once offered her house-room. She gladly accepted, and insisted upon passing the night in my room that she might be of some service to me; but she counted on having greater endurance than she really had.”

Aalt had now opened all the blinds, and the bright sunlight streamed into the room. The sick woman was much cheered by the change. She now asked Walter if he would join her in a prayer for her son; Harmsen gladly complied. He knelt by the side of the bed and prayed aloud to the Lord that he would be pleased to do after this woman’s strong desire and bring her son to repentance and conversion.

While Walter was praying the little window opening into the barn was again softly raised without attracting Walter’s attention, and the face of Duik Allers appeared before it. He was not a little surprised to find a stranger kneeling at his mother’s bedside. He listened intently when he perceived

that he was himself the subject of prayer, and his frequent changes of color indicated that the words made an impression upon him. Before Walter rose to his feet Duik had again closed the window and disappeared into a remote corner of the barn. He did not go to the Papen road.

The servant had also entered the room. She remained at a respectful distance until the prayer was ended, and then approached the bedside and, addressing the sick woman, said,

"I am sincerely thankful that you have permitted me to remain this night with you. I shall now leave you, for I dare not longer impose upon your goodness."

"You owe me no thanks, Aalt," said the woman; "I am glad to have afforded you shelter, for my house is ever open to those who are in trouble. What do you intend to do?"

"I am going to Leyden; and if I do not gain my object there, I shall return to you. Will you let me do this?"

"Certainly," replied Dame Allers. "But let me give you some good advice: look up on high for guidance in your ways, that they may be ways of uprightness."

The housemaid appeared to be somewhat surprised at these words, as if she were not accustomed to get such advice.

"May I know what you desire to do at Ley-

den?" asked Walter, who wanted to enter into conversation with her. "Perhaps I can be of service to you, for I reside in Leyden."

"I cannot tell any one," replied the girl, rather curtly.

"Not even the Lord?" asked the sick woman.

"'The Lord'? 'The Lord'?" rejoined the housemaid. "What Lord?"

Walter regarded the servant in surprise. Was it real ignorance which made her speak so, or was the ignorance only affected? He could not obtain a satisfactory answer to this question by a study of her countenance, for her eye was cold and expressionless and her aspect had little that was pleasing. The sick woman looked at Walter as if she meant to invite him to instruct the poor girl by a suitable answer to her question.

"Did you not say that you were intending to go to Leyden?" continued Walter. "If this is so, I will accompany you for a little distance, and then I shall take the opportunity to reply to your question. Do you approve of this?"

The servant regarded Walter with a look of suspicion; but when she noted the frank and friendly expression of the evangelist's eye, her mistrust seemed to melt away, and she agreed to his proposal. She took leave of Dame Allers, and placed under her arm a small bundle carefully wrapped up in a handkerchief.

While Walter Harmsen and Aalt walked along the highway the former sought to make clear to her the being of God, his claims upon her love and her duty to him. He could not ascertain what impression his words were making, for Aalt made no reply, although listening with no lack of attention. As Walter wished to get some further information regarding the steward of Wyngaerden House, he at length changed the subject and asked her in regard to her service at the mansion. She informed him that she had come to these parts by reason of peculiar circumstances, but that she could explain these to no one.

"Could not the steward be induced to take you into his service again?" asked Walter.

"Certainly not, for he is a miser and thinks this is a fine excuse to withhold from me the wages that he owes me. But I will not forgive the debt, and before this month is out I will make him pay me."

"But if you cannot gain access to him, how will you get your money?"

"I can get into the mansion in spite of him," replied the housemaid, decisively.—"And I *must* get inside," she half muttered to herself, "for there lies just the treasure that for a year I have been hunting for."

"Perhaps I can speak a good word for you to the steward?" suggested Walter. "I intend soon to pay him a visit."

"I thank you," replied the woman, "but you would give yourself trouble for nothing. When do you expect to see the steward?"

"This very morning," replied Walter. "Cannot I really do anything for you before you resort to methods which I fear will be wrong?"

The girl reflected a moment, and then said,

"Perhaps."

"And how?" asked Walter.

"Try, in the course of conversation, to mention just three words."

"What are they?"

"'St. Luke's day,'" said the housemaid.

Walter was slightly startled. This was the second time he had been requested to employ this reminder. Was there collusion between this woman and the sufferer in the cabin? Then what occurrence could it have been that took place on that day, the recollection of which was relied on to produce so potent an influence upon the steward?

These thoughts were passing through Walter's mind and he was on the point of asking the housemaid for an explanation, when she said,

"See! yonder is the road to Wyngaerden House. I shall keep on my way to Leyden. Good-day!" and without further words she left the evangelist to his reflections.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEARDING THE STEWARD IN HIS DEN.

AS Walter proceeded along the road that would conduct him to Wyngaerden House he remained plunged in deep thought. It seemed a rather peculiar course into which he had been drawn by circumstances. More than once he was on the point of turning back, for he did not greatly like the idea of making the acquaintance of this man who had been represented to him as cruel and niggardly in his dealings with his dependants; but when, on the other hand, he reminded himself of the request of the man whose soul was oppressed by some great secret, and when he recalled the promise he had made Joris, he put from him every obstacle which his own reluctance threw in the way.

“Who knows,” he consoled himself, “but that the Lord is letting all these things work together in this manner to make me the instrument in his hands for bringing this old steward to better thoughts? Thus, even though I may not succeed to-day, perhaps the Lord will permit me to lay foundations to be built upon later, when I shall

visit the mansion more frequently during Lady Jacoba's stay. The Lord grant this! How I would rejoice! Therefore, though this undertaking is not much to my liking, I will nevertheless persevere in it and crucify the flesh."

The sun was now not far from the meridian and lit up the tops of the trees, which threw their long shadows athwart the meadows that bordered the woody path. It was unusually warm, so that Walter was compelled to loosen his cloak. He was soon upon the Papen road, and not long after beheld the ancient Wyngaerden House with its dilapidated walls. It stood in the midst of a small park of lofty oak trees and was surrounded by a narrow moat, which, however, contained no water.

When Walter approached the little bridge that gave access to the house, he found chopping wood an old man who had taken up such a position that no one could get to the mansion without his permission. When Walter came nearer, the man laid down his axe and asked him what he wished.

"Is the steward at home?" asked Walter.

The man looked at Walter in utter surprise, as if it seemed altogether incredible to him that any one could ask such a question.

"'At home'? 'At home'?" he replied, derisively. "As long as I can remember, the steward has never left his nest. He's a bird that's always hatching."

"I trust, then, that something good will come of it," said Walter, wishing to enter into the humor of his odd interlocutor.

"‘Something good’! ‘Something good’!" cried the man. "You can't hatch storks from owls' eggs, nor doves from magpies'."

"What must I understand by that?" inquired Walter, wishing to draw him out.

"‘Understand’? ‘Understand’?" said the man, who seemed to be in the habit of repeating a portion of the words addressed to him. "Owls love old buildings and magpies have long claws."

"You'll have to explain yourself a little better, my friend," continued Walter, much amused. "How can you expect me to comprehend your proverbs?"

"‘Explain’? ‘Explain’?" answered the man, who at every reply looked his questioner all over from top to toe, as if he were a strange animal. "Certainly. You asked me if the steward was at home. He is always at home; and if you wish to see him, be careful not to get too near him. And don't trouble him about money-matters, for he is in a quarrelsome mood, as he usually is about this time every October."

This information was not greatly calculated to give Walter encouragement, but, having come thus far, he determined, with God's help, to continue.

"Where is the steward just now?" he inquired.

“ ‘Just now ’ ? ‘Just now ’ ? ” repeated the wood-chopper. “ Look here ! ” he continued, lifting up the heavy axe and pointing with it to the house. “ Do you see that knocker upon the oaken door ? Knock three times as loud as you can ; then some one will open the door and let you in. ”

Walter thanked his informant and proceeded to the door. Having knocked three times, according to directions, the door was opened after a short interval by a man-servant, who after asking some questions conducted Walter to a hall and told him to knock at a door at the other end, where he would very likely find the steward. With a beating heart Harmsen went along the hall, and soon stood opposite the door ; sending a quick silent prayer up to God, he knocked and waited the issue.

When Walter entered at a gruff summons from within, he perceived some one standing before an open chest ; but when, partially turning himself, the latter person saw that it was a stranger who entered, he threw an angry glance at Walter, and, growling out some unintelligible words, grasped some bags that were lying on the floor and tossed them hastily into the chest. It was the steward. When, however, he had risen from the floor and had turned fully round upon his visitor, he discovered that the person before him evidently was, to judge from his dress, one of the evangelists of the neighborhood. He now assumed a much more

affable demeanor. Nevertheless, he closed and locked his chest, after which he offered Walter a chair.

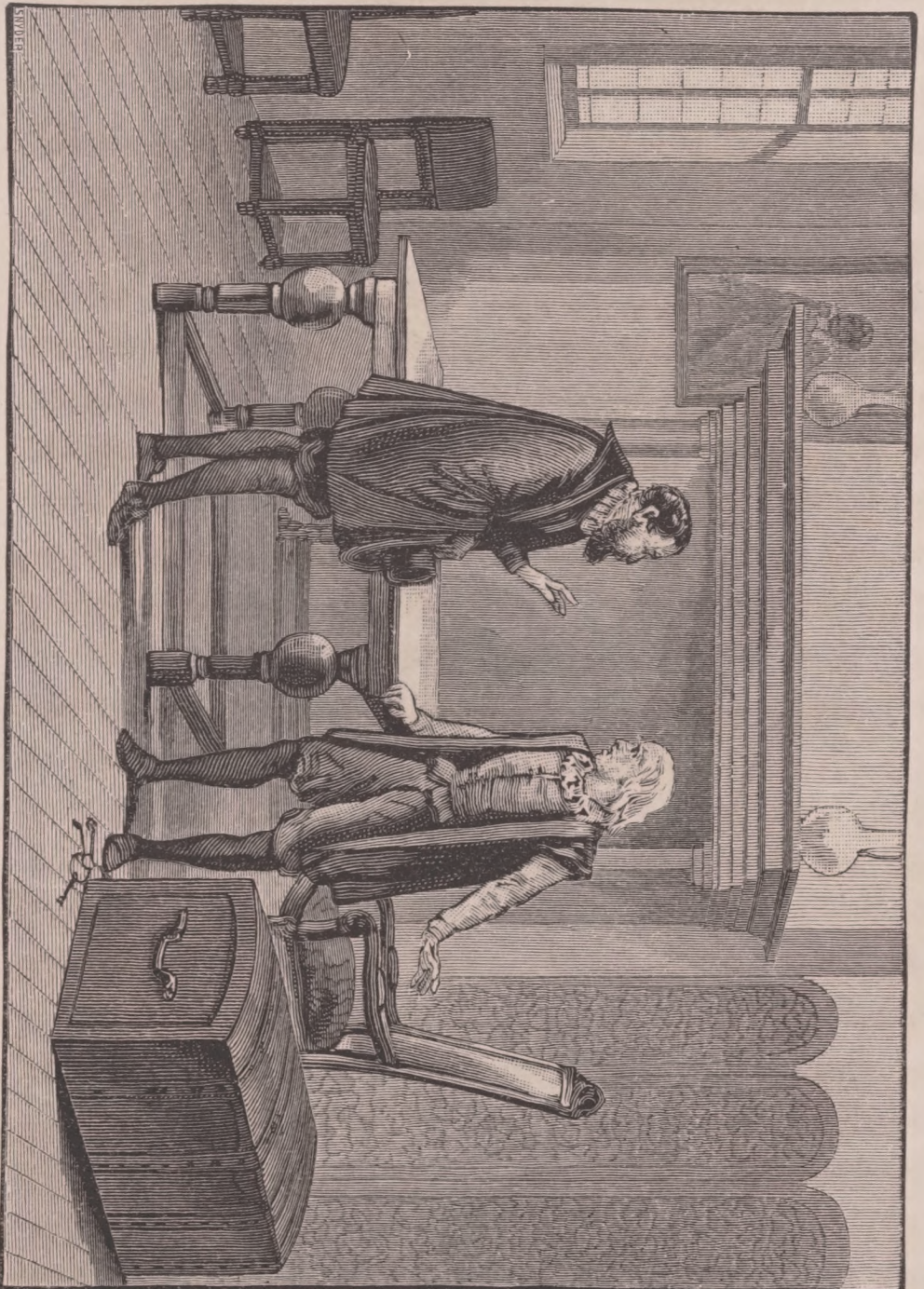
Walter Harmsen was quite at a loss how to begin the conversation, being in the presence of a man whom he had never met before, and whom he wished to see upon no very agreeable errand. Mindful, however, of the apostolic admonition to be friendly, to bear with evil men and to speak with all gentleness, meekness and prudence, he smilingly pointed to the money-chest and said,

"It seems that the Lord has prospered you much, seeing you can afford to keep a chest full of money."

"They are but a few pennies, worthy sir," replied the steward, "which with great industry I have managed to save in the service of the lord of Sandhorst during these last fifty years. However, I will not be able to add many more to them; I am growing old and cannot visit the markets in person. And there is but little chance to make any profits, for people are getting more and more avaricious."

"That is indeed sad," observed Walter, "for, since the love of money is a root of all evil, the fruits of such prevalent avarice can be anything but agreeable in God's sight. I trust that you yourself have not so set your heart on money as to make an idol of it?"

The steward was standing by the chest while



Walter Harmsen and the Steward.

Walter spoke these words, and, whether he doubted if it were securely locked or because he had some other end in view, he began to make such a rattling noise with the huge key in the grating lock that Walter could scarcely hear the latter part of his own sentence. Accordingly, he ceased speaking, comprehending that the old man could hardly have an excuse to keep it up the entire hour and quietly waiting for him to stop. The steward soon perceived that the stranger was not to be put off in this way; he had thus frightened away many another unwelcome visitor. Seeing that the disturbance made no impression upon the imperturbable patience of the person with whom he now had to deal, he turned and said with considerable asperity,

“I do not understand what I have to do with such questions as that. Who ever puts these to a man like me, upon the brink of the grave? I thought you came to see me about buying or selling, or about some one who wished to hire apartments at Wyngaerden House. That would suit me much better, for there is hardly anything to be earned in any other way, and I surely ought to provide for my old age.”

Walter perceived that the steward was not easily to be brought to converse upon matters of his soul's welfare. In the hope of keeping him to that subject as nearly as possible without needlessly

exasperating him, he allowed the old man to divert him for a moment from his original question, and fell in with the request to talk on business.

"To provide for old age, my friend, is commendable. I must confess, however, that I did not come to transact any commercial business with you, nor do I need any apartments for myself—"

As Walter hesitated a moment at this point, wondering how he would introduce the subject of Jacoba's coming, the steward looked at him askance with an expression that said plainly as words, "Why, then, disturb me in my most delightful occupation?"

"Nevertheless," continued Walter, "I believe I will have to make a bargain with you as regards the greater portion of the mansion. But it is in behalf of another, of one—"

The steward feared that the visitor might here be getting back to that question about God, especially as Walter hesitated again; he accordingly quickly interrupted him and asked in mollified tones,

"In behalf of others, did you say? Which others? Are they rich? Have they many servants? Do they bring their own horses along? How much would they be willing to give? Certainly more than ten florins per month a person? From which country do they come? Are they French, Italians, Spaniards or—"

The steward's breath failed or else his list of geographical names came to an end; at any rate, he ceased questioning, although with evident reluctance. The evangelist could not but smile while listening to this torrent of inquiries pouring from the old man's mouth although his purpose was painfully evident.

"I must tell you, Mr. Steward," replied Walter, "that I cannot undertake to answer all these questions, but, seeing you are a man of some years and of experience in business, I suppose you can patiently wait till you see the party to obtain information in regard to some of the points. I can only ask you to reserve for two ladies and their attendants all the portion you are accustomed to rent; no doubt you can make satisfactory terms with them when they come."

"I am sorry you cannot tell me just how many servants there will be. Besides, I have heard of one French lady coming—inquiries were made to that effect—and I may have to let her have the rooms."

"I think the lady you mean is the same as one of these two—"

"Oh, indeed! and they are your friends! Will you do me the favor, then, to tell them they can get no place so cheap, so quiet, so comfortable, so beautiful, so agreeable, so—I don't know what more—as this house? Will you tell them so?"

“When I meet these persons,” replied Walter, “I will gladly do so. But now allow me also to ask you a favor—to give me an answer to a question which is of great importance to yourself, and which I have obliged myself to put to you. Will you—”

“Is there anything to be made by it?” quickly interrupted the steward, suspecting a return to the first subject broached between them. “I am satisfied if I secure but a small profit in all my transactions. I sell my wood about half as cheap as the steward of Raaphorst, and you can get all sorts of articles from me. There is nothing that you can desire but I have it on hand—gunpowder, fire-arms, swords, clothes, furniture, writing-materials, books—I can’t enumerate them all—everything by which I can turn an honest penny.”

“I repeat what I have more than once told you, Mr. Steward,” said Walter, with an emphasis that could not be mistaken and a seriousness that forbade further trifling—“that I am not come either to buy or to sell; and, now that I have spoken for the apartments in behalf of my friends, I have no more business matters on hand. But I must put a question to you.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OMINOUS WORDS.

MORE and more clearly the steward began to see that the person he had at present to deal with was a man of immovable perseverance, but before he would quite surrender himself he meant to make one more effort to escape his uncomfortable questionings. He knew it would not be wise policy to exercise his usual harshness toward the stranger, who evidently had been the means of procuring him profitable tenants. Accordingly, he replied to Walter Harmsen's last and emphatic assertion:

"Pardon me, but I am an old man and not at all capable of answering questions put to me by such learned gentlemen as belong to your profession. I am but a poor insignificant steward who is trying to get through this world the best he may. Be so kind as to ask me nothing except what relates to buying and selling, and do not ask concerning too difficult matters even here, for my mind is becoming so weak that sometimes I hardly know whether twice two is four or five. Tell me, therefore, first of all, whether your question will have

reference to business, for of other things I know nothing."

"That is indeed sad, both for you and for me," said Walter, "and I—"

"Sad for you?" interrupted the steward, quickly, conceiving a slight hope that, after all, he might have a business-transaction in mind. "How so? I should think it was all the better for you; if you wish to do business, it had better be done with one who thoroughly understands it and gives his whole mind to it. What, then, is it you wish? Shall we go up stairs or down to the cellar? Propose whichever storeroom you please. My goods are distributed all over."

In spite of himself, Walter smiled at the cunning of the old man in his endeavors to avoid a return to the first question. Nevertheless, he was more than ever filled with an earnest determination to reach this hardened conscience, and from his soul deplored the ruinous love of money that kept this gray-headed man fast in the toils of Satan.

"I am greatly obliged," Walter resumed, "but in your house there really is nothing which I desire to purchase. I can truly say with the apostle that I desire not yours, but you. But permit me to ask you two questions."

"'Two questions'!" thought the steward. "This man is wonderfully persistent. First he spoke of one question, and now of two. I think I will have

to give in to him, or else he will be coming with three or more." Then, speaking audibly, he said dryly,

"Well, what are the questions that you wish to ask me?"

Walter sent up another swift and silent prayer, and replied,

"A moment ago you remarked that you were an aged man on the brink of the grave. One who is compelled habitually to walk upon the edge of an abyss is in danger of falling into it. What would be the consequence if you should fall into this abyss—this grave?"

"I have no time to think of such things," answered the steward, walking to the window and beginning to beat a march upon the panes.

"So much the worse for you," said Walter, "for then death may surprise you while you are least prepared for that grave. I should be very much mistaken, no doubt, were I to hint that your papers and receipts were not all in order to be rendered an account of at any moment to the lord of Sandhorst, but you may have forgotten that there is still a very old account standing between you and—"

"'An old account'?" interrupted the steward. "I know of no old account. There is not a soul to whom I owe a penny. On the contrary, because the world is full of cheats and misers, there are a multitude of people who owe me, and for whose

payments I have long waited in vain. In the first place, there is Farmer Seving, who—”

“Permit me to remark,” said Walter, “that there are, nevertheless, a few persons who have against you a claim for payment. For instance, there is little Joris Ruikmans—”

“What!” exclaimed the steward, turning abruptly. “Does that self-important little fellow imagine that I owe him anything? Have I not been the means of his earning his bread and butter? Was not his wife enabled by my intervention to purchase the greater part of the wares in her shop at half price? Did I not save his life? Nay, the ingratitude of that little rascal is beyond endurance. If he dares to come near me, I shall give him a chance to spend some of his time growling in the stone cell. You may tell him that; that will be sure to take away all his taste for money that he has not earned.”

“But he insists that you owe him the money,” said Walter.

“I insist that I do not, and that he will not get any,” said the steward, drumming upon the window-panes with as much violence and noise as he could.

“But surely it is a mere bagatelle to you?” said Walter.

“‘A bagatelle’! He demanded more than two florins. I could buy half an acre of land with that and have something over. ‘Two florins’!

How did he get it into his brain? I tell you what, first and last: he shall not have a cent."

"Then the old account must remain unclosed, unsettled?" asked Walter, impressively.

"'Old account'!" cried the steward, turning to Walter red in the face with anger; "I have no old account with Joris."

"I did not say that you had an account of long standing with *Joris*," said Walter, gently.

"With whom, then?" asked the steward, in a towering passion.

"With Him of whom we are told that we must all appear before his judgment-seat to render an account for the deeds done in the body."

"Ho, ho!" exclaimed the steward. "It has not got so far as that yet. After my death those things will all be made right; there's time enough yet. Besides, I often read the psalms of Dathenus. I am not so bad, therefore, as many other people, who never look into a good book and have much more reason to fear that things will not go right with them. It is quite different in my case. I—"

"But you do not expect that Dathenus will settle that old account?" asked Walter. "Think you the Lord God will be satisfied if you hold up before him the psalms of Dathenus?"

"Look here!" said the steward, greatly vexed. "I will have nothing to do with all those old accounts you speak of. I have so much to attend

to here at Wyngaerden House that I can take no time to give my thoughts to these matters. Is there anything else you want with me?"

"I should like to remind you that a certain housemaid by the name of Aalt—"

"It seems that you have taken it upon yourself to mind my affairs," said the steward. "What is that housemaid to you? Her effects are here; and if she wants them, I will cause them to be placed on the bridge, where she can get them herself."

"She spoke, however, of some wages that were due to her from you."

The steward could not endure it at the window-panes any longer. He came and confronted Walter, and said with malice depicted in every feature,

"Again you demand money! Perhaps by and by you will be wanting some for yourself? I am well quit of that woman; let her go back to her own parts. Besides, I cannot spare you any more time: it is near twelve o'clock, and that is my dinner-hour."

Walter heaved a deep sigh. No matter what he said, whether in gentleness or in a way to search his conscience, nothing seemed capable of moving the obdurate heart of the steward. He could not, however, bring himself to leave until he had complied with the request of the sick man in the sand-hills.

"Pardon me, Mr. Steward," he resumed, "but I

must make one more request. Last night I was among the sandhills and stood by the sick-bed of a man who was in great trouble."

"How can that concern me?" said the steward. "That is none of my business. I tell you again that I can spare no more time."

"But that man seemed to be in trouble on your account."

"On *my* account?" inquired the steward, derisively. "I suppose the fellow was in money-straits and thought I ought to help him out. I am only too well acquainted with that sort of trouble."

"No; he did not seem to be in want of money," said Walter. "A secret appeared to oppress him, and he besought me to request you to come to him to-day or to-morrow."

"A secret? and wanting me to go to him?" exclaimed the steward, walking up and down the apartment. "That is very likely one of those secrets which I am to resolve by aid of my purse. Believe me, you have been made the tool of designing people who have determined to get money out of me. As to leaving this house, the prince and the States-General combined cannot move me to leave the mansion. If I should leave it but for an hour, those highwaymen would swoop down upon it to rob me. There is no power on earth that can compel me to go to the sandhills. A fine

thing, to ask me to crawl into a miserable hut! Evidently, a snare prepared by robbers. No; I will not listen to it. I do not propose that any one shall entice me away from home."

"Not even God?" asked Walter, with quiet but searching earnestness.

"'God'! 'God'! You always come back to 'God.' Why bother my head about such thoughts? It will be time enough when I am sick. Leave me alone; I have no time for more conversation. The days are getting short, for it is almost—"

"St. Luke's day," said Walter.

"St. Luke's— St. Luke's day!" exclaimed the steward; and he started back a few strides, as if a serpent had suddenly risen up before him.

"I was requested to remind you of St. Luke's day," added Walter.

The steward, who had hitherto given free vent to his vexation, and whose face had been flushed with anger, now seemed overcome by a sudden consternation and turned deathly pale. He had difficulty in retaining his footing and staggered like a child learning to walk. His eyes, looking out from their sockets, stared at Walter in unspeakable terror, as if he beheld a ghost arising in his stead. He was forced to support himself by grasping the table with both hands; and if Walter had not hastened to his side, he certainly would have fallen.

"St. Luke's day!" stammered the steward.

“Yes,” said Walter, observing that the man’s conscience had at last been aroused; “the sick man in the sandhills mentioned that day, and requested me to bring it to your mind. He thought that if he sent you this word you would certainly go to him.”

The steward covered his eyes with both hands, as if he foresaw some threatening danger.

“What shall I tell the man?” asked Walter.

The steward looked at Walter like one who has lost his senses. He seized the arms of the chair to which Walter had helped him, clutching them nervously, and, leaning forward, stared at him in still greater terror than before.

“Tell him?” he said, in broken sentences. “Tell him nothing. But no; tell him only— Tell him that I will give him as much money— No! no money! I am a poor man; the ravens come and steal it all away. Ha! what is this here?” he continued, laying his hand on his heart. “Something hurts me here. No, tell him nothing; I shall be sure to come. Where is that cabin?”

“Back of the high sandhill in the rear of Ledeganck’s house at Wassenaar,” answered Walter.

At this moment there was a knock at the door of the room, and one of the laborers entered the apartment with the announcement that a gentleman on horseback had come to the house, inquiring if Mr. Walter Harmsen were within.

“Who can that be?” thought Walter; and, going to the window, he perceived that the gentleman on horseback was none other than Major Gapertz. He at once feared that something had occurred at the house of Lord St. Aldegonde.

“Tell that gentleman,” he said to the laborer, “that I will be with him directly.”

Walter now turned to the steward, who sat, the very picture of despair, gazing, paralyzed with fright, into a future that was fraught with terrible forebodings. Harmsen felt that a word of cheer was here eminently in place, and, bending down close to his ear, he spoke in friendly tones:

“With God are the issues of life and death. If you turn to him as a repentant sinner, he will for Jesus’ sake take away all your sins and your oppressing anxiety and fear. God loves even the chief of sinners. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”

But the steward gave no sign that he understood, or even heard, Walter’s words. He remained seated, as if still bereft of the use of his powers, and seemed crushed to the earth by some awful weight. It appeared to Walter that he could do nothing more for him, and that the steward needed time for reflection. After uttering a few more words of encouragement he withdrew from the room and the house, leaving the steward alone with his conscience.

"I am glad that I found you here," said Major Gapertz when Walter reached him.

"Why did you come after me?" asked the latter, rejoicing in the contrast of the fresh air and the hearty greeting of his friend with the depressing experiences of the room above. "Has Baron Jacob become worse?"

"No; he is much better," replied the major. "The doctor this morning pronounced him out of all danger. But I was glad to get into the air after the anxiety of the night before, and, as I surmised you might be here, I thought I would ride as far as this and have your company back."

Thus speaking, the major turned his horse's head, and Walter walked along by his side. The latter gave his friend an account of his interview with the steward, but carefully avoided mentioning the talismanic words and relating their effect upon the old man. Ere long the two men reached the house of their distinguished host.

CHAPTER XV.

AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE.

THE position of the sun indicated that it was about the middle of the afternoon when Walter Harmsen and the major were approaching the lane leading from the highway between The Hague and Leyden to the village of Wassenaar. The major was on horseback, and intended visiting certain friends residing on the road to The Hague before returning to his home in the latter city. The two friends here separated, Walter entering the lane. It was his intention to pay his friend Ledeganck a short visit, and after that to direct his steps to the sandhills, in the hope of finding the sick man alone in the cabin, and wishing, if possible, to bring to him a word of comfort amid the trouble that evidently oppressed his heart. While the evangelist is visiting at the house of the wagon-maker we will precede him to the sandhills and see what is happening there that may be worthy of our attention.

About the time that Walter entered Ledeganck's house a man might have been seen leaving the

Horster lane, which led from the village of Voor-schoten to the so-called Rapers sandhill, losing itself in the sand at the latter point. The man in question was far from being steady in his gait. From time to time he stood still and looked around him like a person who had lost his way and was trying to locate himself or to ascertain the points of the compass. Otherwise, he kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, gazing intently downward and casting furtive glances to every side. Occasionally he would clasp his stick with both hands in a nervous, desperate way; then he would stagger on, soon to stop again, however, until, reaching the foot of one of the yellow sandhills, he sank down altogether, as if utterly exhausted.

"St. Luke's! St. Luke's! I—" he cried, in a tone loud enough to be called a scream.

But suddenly the man would recollect himself and look around as if afraid that some one might have heard him. He bowed his head upon his breast and rested his forehead, dripping with cold sweat, upon the top of his stick. A solitary finch passed in rapid flight above him, chirping as it went; at the sound of the rushing wings the man leaped from the ground with a sudden spring. He cast suspicious glances right and left and lifted the stick in a threatening manner, as if an enemy were about to assail him; next he ran up the side of the hill, as if trying to escape pursuit, only to sink into

the deep sand when scarce halfway up. Evidently, the person was being tormented by his conscience; the agonies of remorse were apparent in his looks, in the heaving of his breast and in his half-open mouth. Having risen and proceeded to the top of the hill, he stood still again. At a distance he observed a miserable dwelling located in a hollow between two sandhills.

"Can that be the place?" he asked himself. "Will he be alone? What will he have to say to me? Oh, I know! Hush! hush! I hear it! No, I will not listen to it. The dead are risen."

He ceased talking to himself and stared down into the sand, as if he sought for some opening wherein he might hide himself.

"Ha! I know!" he said. "I know what to do! I will fill his hands and his mouth with copper and silver. How much do I possess? How much have I saved through all the years I was steward to the lord of Sandhorst? How much have I with me?"

He pulled out a dingy leather purse, poured its contents upon his emaciated hand and began to count:

"One, two, three—six double stivers! That's too much; four will do. But that is for his hands, and there is his mouth! Oh, that mouth! If that mouth should speak! Ah! and that mouth of the dead one! He is risen from the grave; he

pursues me. Oh, what would Loth Huyghens Gael— Hold! do not let me speak that name, for that man has as many ways of hearing as there are grains of sand at my feet. But what is that?"

He opened his mouth wide like one gasping for air, in a nervous clutch grasped his clothing at the breast and looked with a frightened glance in the direction whence he had come, and where he discovered four men coming toward him.

"On, on! The dead is coming," he screamed; and like a hunted stag he ran up hill and down through the heavy sand, until he sank exhausted among some blackberry-bushes.

Near the cabin at which the steward of Wyn-gaerden House had been gazing from afar were seated two men; they were looking intently in the direction of the village of Wassenaar.

"Do you think he will come, Geert?" said one of them, whose Flemish accent announces him to us at once as Geert Herman's companion in crime, François Bardes.

"I have no doubt of it," answered Herman. "From the time that he turned into the Wassenaar lane I have not lost sight of him a moment. He is now at the wagonmaker Ledeganck's, and it would not at all surprise me to see him coming this way along yonder dunes pretty soon. Have you heard from Duik Allers?"

"No, not a word," replied the Fleming. "This

morning I was at his house, but I did not see him; perhaps he was sleeping, as usual. We cannot do anything with him; that fellow seems to be listening to his mother more than to us. As if he could make anything by pious talk!"

"What can Duik be doing now?" said Geert Herman. "He has seen Aalt, who told him she had been in The Hague and had met *her* and *she* is expected to come to this neighborhood." He laid a peculiar and significant stress on the words "*her*" and "*she*."

"Yes, *she* is in The Hague and with a lady of this preacher's acquaintance," said François Bardes. "I wonder what will be the consequence, and who will be the first to reach their object—*we* or *she*?"

"Yes, I am curious to know that too," said Geert; "but it will soon be decided. How long did this Harmsen stay at Dame Allers's?"

"Not very long. Shortly after I caught sight of him through the window I saw him leave the house with Aalt; she went toward Leyden, and he toward Wyngaerden House. As it was of more importance to watch the woman, I followed her until she was near the office of Sheriff Loth Huyghens Gael. I would like to know what was her business there."

"I have been thinking that over myself," said the cloth-weaver, although he was quite certain what her business had been. "I think, however,

she was merely hoping to secure the aid of the sheriff in getting the wages that the steward owes her. But I doubt whether Mr. Gael, with all his constables, will be able to get a penny out of that old miser."

"Well, what they cannot do we will try our hand at," remarked the Fleming, with a laugh. "The more he keeps in his chest, the better for us. I only hope we will be lucky enough to tempt the steward into this snare. But tell me: how was it possible for Aalt to take the ring and the girdle from you? Such a thing could never have happened to me."

"Aalt has not got either of them," replied Geert Herman, a little angered by these words. "However, where these things flew to I declare I do not know. But what of them? It was nothing but a plain silver ring—broad and thick, indeed, but not worth much money; and the girdle was worth nothing at all. I am even glad I got rid of them. You know I bought them about a year ago from Hugh. But why that girl was so set upon getting possession of them is a matter that I do not at all understand."

François Bardes looked at the cloth-weaver in a way that plainly indicated that he gave no credence to what he had just heard, and Geert Herman dare not meet his companion's eye, fully aware of his disbelief. Herman accordingly at once changed the

subject, and brought the conversation back to the steward of Wyngaerden House.

"I hope," said Bardes, "that the old rat will run into the trap. But tell me, Geert: how in the world did you manage to induce the preacher to come to this place so near night-time?"

"Oh, that was not so very difficult," replied the cloth-weaver. "After we had consulted together, as you know, and had forced from Hugh the promise that he would tell the preacher no more than was agreed upon, I undertook to fetch him. Well, I was a little uncertain myself at first how to get at him, but on the way to the village I thought of something that might do. I put on the disguise of an old man, in which you saw me afterward while Harmsen was here. You know that these pious folks—and in these parts even more than elsewhere—are very credulous, and are always ready to do anything for you when you come to them with a request to visit the sick and talk religion to them. Now, it was just lucky for my project that Hugh was suffering more than usual from fits and was greatly disturbed by his wonderful visions, as he calls them, which cause him to rant about St. Luke's and the steward and the dead man, and to make him ask for preachers and prayers. As if these could help him any better than poultices and herbs!"

"All nonsense!" said the Fleming, derisively. "But go on."

“ Well, bearing all this in mind, and disguising myself lest any of Ledeganck’s people might recognize me, and also that I might represent myself as Hugh’s father, I went to the shed where we had seen the crowd listening to this Harmsen, and, finding one of Ledeganck’s men at work near it, I asked him if I could see Mr. Harmsen. He went in and repeated my request, and after a while Harmsen came out into the shed. As I had supposed, it required but little effort to get him to come with me ; and I almost died with laughter at the way he tried to help me walk through the sand. Well, I got him to the cabin, and the rest you know yourself.”

“ Yes, and I was not going to make myself heard at all,” said Bardes ; “ but when Hugh began with his St. Luke’s, I thought I would put in a word or two to cut matters short ; for I do not understand what St. Luke’s day has to do with the steward and Hugh. Do you ?”

“ I comprehend it as little as you do,” replied the other ; “ all I know is that St. Luke’s day is the eighteenth of October, and that Hugh always feels worse about that time. I wonder if this Harmsen mentioned that name to the steward and what effect it had upon him ? But look ! Who is that yonder coming up that low sandhill ?”

Both men looked sharply, and at some distance they observed a man coming toward the cabin.

"That fellow seems to be drunk," exclaimed Bardes.

"Hush !" said Herman, seizing his companion's arm ; "do you not recognize who it is?"

"No, I do not," said the Fleming. "Who is it?"

"Why, no one else than the steward of Wyn-gaerden House. Let us leave this place now ; and when the miser is well in the house, let us improve our chance to rummage his money-chest."

The two robbers withdrew behind the hut to await the steward's coming. Scarce had they concealed themselves there when Geert Herman again seized the Fleming's arm, and, pointing in the direction of Wassenaar, he said,

"Look who is coming !"

"The evangelist?" asked Bardes.

"Yes, it is Harmsen," replied Herman. "Here we have two birds killed with one stone. Now I am curious to know what sort of a time these two will have here. But let us get away and hide ourselves, so that neither of them may discover us."

While the two villains were creeping on hands and knees through the sand to conceal themselves among some blackberry-bushes not far from the cabin, and while the steward from the direction of the Rapers sandhills, and Walter from that of Wassenaar, were approaching the hut, four men might have been seen emerging from a piece of

woods bordering on the sandhills, one of them being on horseback.

"Remember well what I have told you, men," said the latter, who seemed to have a right to command. "You must approach the hut from three different directions, and whatever rascals you find there you will arrest and bind securely. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Your Honor," answered the three others.

"After you have done that, do you," pointing with his finger to one of the men, "come back to this spot to report, and then we will make arrangements for what is next to be done."

"Very well, Mr. Gael," said the one addressed. "But what are we to do with the sick man?"

"Let him lie where he is until I come up with the other constables whom I left at the farm of Persyn. Be careful to make sure of the cloth-weaver and the Fleming. Understand?"

"Certainly, Mr. Sheriff," was the reply.

"Well, then, off to your duty. It is still daylight, so they cannot get away without your seeing them. Do not let those fellows escape you, for you know they are as slippery as eels."

"We will take care of that, Your Honor," said one of the men. "If once we get them into our hands, they shall not get away from us."

Mr. Loth Huyghens Gael, sheriff of Leyden, now left the woods and rode toward the farm he

had mentioned to his men, which was situated close beside the Rapers dune, while the three constables entered the sandhills from three different directions intending to approach the hut with great caution, lest their coming should prematurely be discovered.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MYSTERY UNFOLDED.

WITHIN the cabin lay Hugh. It was very still ; nothing was heard but the heaving of a troubled breast.

This miserable hut had not originally been erected for a dwelling-house. Formerly it had served as a refuge from the rain or the hail when the nobility of the neighborhood were in the habit of hunting the coney-s or the dune-rabbits, in case they were overtaken by a sudden storm ; but since coney-hunting had gone out of fashion the hut remained as a relic of former sports, and was made to serve as a shelter to many a highwayman or fisherman belated hereabouts, to whom it afforded a night-lodging sufficiently comfortable. Having been discovered by Geert Herman and his accomplices, they made it their rendezvous. Here they had fixed up a place for Hugh to pass his time while suffering from his fits.

Poor Hugh ! he lay there quite forsaken. Being afflicted both in body and in soul, he was indeed to be pitied. He was a partner in the evil practices

of the cloth-weaver and the Fleming, and was thus wholly in their power and at the mercy of their moods and wishes. Within the last few days he had been entirely incapacitated by terrible attacks of his old malady, and thus could not share in their criminal exploits. From time to time he had tried to raise himself from the bed of moss that had been spread on the floor, but he had found it impossible ; now he lay perfectly still. He tried to sleep, but neither did he succeed in this ; he therefore lay quietly looking toward the entrance to the cabin and hoping that some comfort or help might come to him, although also oppressed by the expectation of what of a different nature might come.

But it was comfort that came first. After Hugh had been waiting in vain for some time, a person appeared at the entrance, and Hugh perceived with joy that it was Walter Harmsen.

"Have you really come?" asked Hugh, with feeble voice. "I did not dare to hope it."

"Yes, indeed," replied Walter ; "the conviction that you were more in need of the consolations of the gospel than of cordials for the body made me anxious to visit you again when we could be alone together without fear of interruption. How are you feeling now?"

"Oh," replied Hugh, laying his hand on his heart and heaving a deep sigh, "I am pressed

down by a heavy burden which threatens to crush me."

"You must have committed some great wrong," said Walter—"at least, I judge so from your words at our last interview. Can you not make it good in some way? Have you perhaps robbed some one, or are you guilty of even greater sin? In his word the Lord directs that we shall first reconcile ourselves to our neighbor before we ask forgiveness from him. He is indeed merciful and gracious, but neither will nor can he extend his mercy to us so long as we leave unrepaired an injury to our neighbor. Have you thought of this?"

The patient nodded his head affirmatively.

"Well, then," continued Walter, "first of all, remove such obstacles. I will gladly be of service to you if you will confide in me. Tell me what oppresses you. We are here alone."

Hugh was not so sure of this, and whispered, "These thin boards may have ears behind them."

"But I saw no one as I came here," said Walter. "You may safely speak."

"Did you see the steward of Wyngaerden House?" began Hugh.

"Yes; this morning."

"Will he come to me?" inquired the sufferer, with a look of mingled hope and fear.

"I do not know," answered Walter. "He was,

however, terribly startled when I spoke the words you requested me to mention to him."

"Then he will come—yes, he *must* come; he dare not long delay. There *is* retribution."

"Certainly," said Walter; "the Lord shall render unto every man according to his works. Such as have obeyed unrighteousness will receive indignation and wrath, but he who confesses his sins shall find great comfort in Jesus; for he did not come to condemn the world, but to save it."

Hugh sighed; his conscience confirmed the truth of what Walter said.

"But tell me: why is it that those words had such power to startle the hard heart of that man?"

The patient looked at Walter with a searching glance, as if he wished to satisfy himself that confidence might be reposed in him.

"Listen," said Hugh, with a great effort. "But come close to me, so that I can whisper in your ear; then I will tell you."

Walter placed himself as closely as possible to the prostrate form of the sick man, his back to the door and bending his head down to his mouth. He then said,

"Now you may proceed, but do so in truth and sincerity, as under the eye of God."

Hugh took Walter's hand, and, slightly raising himself with Walter's aid, he spoke as follows:

"It is now nearly six years ago. I was then no

better than I am now, but maintained myself by thieving and robbery. On a certain evening—that of the eighteenth of October—I was sitting here in this cabin mending some nets, when the door was suddenly opened, and a man entered. My first impulse was to take flight,” continued Hugh, who spoke with frequent intervals, which we will omit to indicate, “for I thought it might be one of the spies of justice, and I seized my hunting-knife, when this man held me by the wrist and whispered, ‘Do you want to earn five florins?’ I looked at the man in amazement, thinking he was insane, for five florins is a sum which it would require a brick-layer all of six months to earn.* I at once comprehended, however, that this sum would not be given me for any light service, and as my conscience did not trouble me much at that time, and as I knew the man and that his ability to pay me was beyond question, I greedily accepted his offer. ‘Come along with me, then,’ said the man. He left the cabin, and I followed him. An hour later we stood in front of a house. It was almost totally dark when the heavy door had closed behind me. The man left me alone a few moments, and then returned with a lantern, after which he led me through one or two dark hallways to a cellar. The

* The reader is to recall the fact that in those days money was much scarcer and its purchasing power much greater than to-day.

floor of the cellar was laid with red bricks. 'What do you want me to do?' I asked the man, expecting something in the line of my trade.—'I want you to dig in the floor of this cell a hole large enough to contain a human body,' he replied.—'Is there a corpse in this house, then?' I asked. He hesitated a few moments, and then spoke in decisive tones: 'Hugh, you can keep a secret, can you not?'—'Like the grave you wish me to dig,' I answered.—'Exactly,' he said; 'I knew that, and therefore I chose you. Up stairs, in one of the chambers, there is a stranger who—' He stopped.—'Who must be put in here,' I said, pointing to the ground.—'Yes,' he answered.—'And what is that person doing now?' I asked, longing for the money.—'He is now in the chamber in the round tower, busy packing, for he is about to leave, and—'—'And that you wish to prevent,' I said, smiling significantly. The man nodded his head in assent. 'Well,' I continued, 'there's a way of doing that, but—'—'Well, what?' he inquired, eagerly.—'Five florins for the grave, and ten for—' The man laughed bitterly. 'Fifteen florins!' he said. 'What do you mean? That is a fortune. How can you expect me to give you as much as that?'—'Then I go away again, and—' I said.—'No,' he rejoined; 'stay.'—'And you will pay me fifteen florins?'—'Ten,' was the reply.—'But a man's life is surely worth more than five florins?' I observed.—

‘I will not give you more than that,’ he replied, roughly.—‘Then I go back to the sandhills.’ He looked at me for a moment or two, undecided what to do. I could easily read in his face how the lust for the gold of others tempted him to this deed, but that he wished to get it done as cheaply as possible. I had already taken a step or two toward the hall and pretended to be going. He seized me by the arm, however, and said, struggling severely with himself, ‘All right; I will give you the money you say if you will swear by the salvation of your soul never to utter a word about *my* having brought you here.’—‘Yes, but on one condition will I agree to swear this,’ said I, becoming bolder now that he had made known his evil design.—‘And what is it?’ he asked.—‘That at the end of six years I shall be free from my oath and you pay me the same sum over again.’ He looked at me in some wonder; but whether he thought that at the end of that time he or I would long have disappeared from the earth, or that he would probably find some means of shutting my mouth, or that he had some other project in mind, I know not. At any rate, he at once replied with a cunning smile, ‘Well, yes; I am satisfied with that condition. Let the dead rise from the grave, if they will, to remind us of this evening.’”

“How frightful!” said Walter. “How evil is the heart of man! Did you not remember that in

the heavens there is a God who can look down into the lowest depths?"

"Alas, no," answered Hugh, with feeble voice, while he waited a few moments to rest himself. "I thought at that time just as little about God, about retribution or about my own death as about the possibility that the dead might rise to remind me of that evening. And yet *he* has done so. Not an hour passes but he stands here or there or in yonder corner."

Hugh could not speak a word further; he nervously clutched Walter's arm, as if a dreadful fear had overcome him. It took Walter some time to soothe him, wiping the cold sweat from his forehead and assuring him that there was nobody in the room.

Hugh continued:

"That same night, after I had dug the grave, the man led me along several halls and stairways to a large chamber. Through a glass door I saw seated at a table a young man of at most five and twenty years; he was busy writing. Upon the floor lay several articles necessary to a person upon a journey, but I distinctly remember a small square box that stood upon the table. What this casket contained I could not tell, but doubtless this had excited the cupidity of my tempter. 'There he is,' the latter whispered to me. 'Enter softly and spring suddenly upon him; I will do the rest. Think of

the fifteen florins.' At first I felt a cold chill creep over my whole body, but the longing to possess so much money took away all hesitation. The young man had a military bearing and seemed strong and athletic, but the man assured me that he had been severely wounded some months before, was only just recovering from the effects and was still weak. I noiselessly opened the door, and before the stranger could turn I had attacked him from behind and clasped my hands about his throat. 'What do you wish?' he gasped, in scarce audible and smothered tones. 'You are not going to murder me? Oh, my poor wife! my dear child! Spare my life!' I released my hold somewhat, for I began to feel pity for the helpless youth. The man who had tempted me observed my slight hesitation; in the same instant he sprang forward, lifted a heavy axe on high, and before I suspected it or could prevent it the murderous tool fell upon the head of the unhappy stranger."

Walter shuddered as he listened to this recital.

"'Murderers!' cried the stranger with his dying breath. 'God will bring to light this your misdeed even though the saints themselves should rise from their graves. To-day is St. Luke's—' He could speak no more; his lips were sealed for ever. That very night I buried him. Ere I lowered the corpse into the grave—which the man of whom I have spoken left me to do alone—I found a silver

ring on one of his index-fingers and a girdle about his body. Both these articles I secured and preserved—why, I do not know. But about a year ago I parted with them for a small consideration to Geert Herman. A few days after the murder I left this region and went to Overijssel. After wandering about and trying my hand at various things, sometimes enlisting as a soldier, I came to Steenwyk and became acquainted with a certain woman named Aalt. I suspect she knows my secret, and I can account for this in no other way but that either in dreams or during the fits to which I am subject some expression about St. Luke's day, a ring and a girdle may have escaped me. Only about a year ago I came back to these parts and allowed myself to fall into the snares of Herman and Bardes. But the Lord knows how painful these practices now are to me, and how greatly I desire the pardon of God. Oh, if the man who is guilty of the blood of that stranger were only here!"

"Who is the dreadful murderer? And what was the steward's connection with him, that *he* should be so deeply affected by a reference to St. Luke's day? Did he profit by the purchase of that casket from him? Or—"

But Walter suddenly ceased speaking, as there flashed upon him a horrible suspicion which seemed too awful for expression.

"I am not permitted to mention that man's

name," said Hugh; "as I told you, I am bound by an oath until St. Luke's day."

Scarcely had these words been uttered when a loud cry was heard. A man burst into the cabin; it was the steward of Wyngaerden House:

"Hide me! Save me! They come! The dead man comes! There he is! He is pursuing me! Ah, whither shall I flee?"

A cold shiver trembled through Walter's frame when he saw this man standing before him in the twilight of the setting sun; for, although Hugh had not mentioned the murderer's name, circumstances now too plainly pointed to the steward as the man and Wyngaerden House as the scene. He could no longer doubt, when the old man stood there wringing his hands and making these incoherent outcries.

The aroused conscience and the desperate remorse of the latter left him not a moment's repose. Seized by a new fancy, he ran about the apartment like one possessed, and at length sank down in the same corner where Hugh lay upon his miserable pallet. Thus, after endeavoring to suppress the voice of conscience through six years, an awful fear had again brought together these partners in crime. They now experienced the truth of the fact that how long soever the forbearance of God may endure and his justice seem tardy, yet the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night.

Walter had risen ; he judged that this was both a time and a place for the work of an evangelist.

“Mr. Steward,” he said to the old man, pointing to Hugh, “there lies a poor man who perhaps ere long will have to appear at the judgment-seat of God. Is it not high time for you also to confess your guilt before an earthly judge as well as before a heavenly Judge? Now is the time. Fall upon your knees; call upon the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and perhaps—”

“Oh, oh!” groaned the steward. “Only let Hugh keep still; I will give him double the money—double the fifteen florins—if he but says nothing.”

“I do not wish your hush-money,” said Hugh, with feeble voice; “my life has no more value to me. And what good would it do you if I kept still? The dead man speaks.”

“Yes, yes! Oh,” screamed the steward, “he pronounces the sentence; he says ‘St. Luke’s.’”

“Recollect yourself,” said Walter, deeply moved by what he saw and heard. “Do what I tell you: confess your sins before God and deliver yourself up to the earthly judge.”

“No, no!” cried the steward, beating his forehead with his open palm. “I will live; I will not deliver myself up. Mr. Gael knows no mercy; I will not die. I will collect all my treasures and escape everywhere, anywhere, I may.”

“But you can escape neither the Lord nor his avenging justice,” said Walter.

“Yet I will do it,” cried the steward. “No one can tell where the dead man lies ; I will dig another grave. I am old, but strong. No one shall know it. Oh, the dead man ! He comes ! he comes !”

In the agony of his remorse the steward sprang to his feet and was about to rush from the hut, when in the same instant three men appeared at its entrance. The steward staggered back in amazement : they were constables in the service of Mr. Loth Huyghens Gael.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RIDE THROUGH THE FOREST.

WHILE the events just related were taking place in the cabin in the sandhills, and while Geert Herman and François were on their way to Wyngaerden House, a large covered wagon was proceeding along the high-road between The Hague and Leyden. It had left The Hague while it was still daylight, but upon entering the extensive forest that stretches north of the city the shades of evening seemed prematurely to descend. The travelers, however, had provided themselves with torches, as they had expected that darkness would be upon them during part of their ride, and they had not gone far along the forest-road when they were compelled to light these. In the wagon, next to the driver, was seated a tall woman. The second seat, farther back under the canvas cover, was occupied by two other women, whose clothes and bearing, so far as could be seen even by the fitful light of the torches, indicated a condition in society superior to that of the woman upon the front seat. Between the two ladies sat a boy of about nine

years, whose head leaned against the breast of one of them, and who was held by her in a close embrace.

“Joris,” cried the tall woman, whom by this exclamation we at once recognize as Dame Ruikmans — “Joris, be careful not to let the flame of the torch strike the eye of the horse on your side. We might else have an accident, and then, as Scripture says, the last would be worse than the first.”

Joris was walking ahead of the horses to light the way.

“Do not be uneasy, dear wife,” replied the manikin. “I am little, but not stupid; I have had too much experience of life for that.—And,” he sighed, in inaudible tones, “not the least with you, either.”

“What is that you are muttering now?” cried the woman. “No doubt you are dissatisfied with my admonitions. Have I not always told and taught you that as your wife you must have respect unto me? That is what our Bible says. But you give no heed to this, and listen rather to your priests, who are too stupid to live alone and had much better have a good sensible wife for a companion. Yes, you need not grumble,” thinking she heard a sound to that effect; “what I tell you is the pure truth.”

At this juncture a gentle hand was laid upon the speaker's gown, and one of the ladies on the back seat whispered,

"Do not speak so harshly to your husband, Dame Ruikmans; for you know that the same Scripture which you so frequently quote teaches us that we must love one another, and particularly that a wife must submit herself to her husband and be subject to him. This is well-pleasing in the eyes of the Lord."

"I know that very well, Baroness van Vlooswyk," replied Dame Ruikmans, "but one could not have any control over some men if one did not keep them a little under the thumb. It is just the proof of my love that I cannot endure his being so reckless as not to listen to what I say. What would have become of the little man if I had not taken up with him? Yes, and if he had to bring up the child of the Flemish lady alone, it would have grown up a pretty sort of boy."

"I believe," said the lady next to Baroness van Vlooswyk, and whose Flemish accent betrayed the foreigner—"I believe that my dear boy has not had such a bad time of it with your husband. He has told me over and over again how much he thought of him.—Is it not so, dear?" she continued, addressing the boy and fervently pressing him to her heart.

"Joris Ruikmans is a nice man," said the boy, with decision, "and I like him ever so much!"

"Oh," said the Flemish lady—a remark that had not lacked for repetition during this ride—"I can-

not express to you, dear Jacoba, how happy I am that I have recovered my child. How marvelous are the ways of the Lord! I cannot indeed fully make up my mind to cast myself loose from our ancient mother-Church, but I am quite willing to enter into a closer and more personal communion with my God and Saviour, apart from the intervention of priests and saints, seeing that he has entered so signally into my very life and its peculiar circumstances. Perhaps longer and constant contact with you and a prolonged stay in a land where the very atmosphere and surroundings of faith are so different from ours might bring me to what you are urging me. Yet I have gained, and will never abandon, this sense of personal, individual communion with my own precious Lord."

"Yes, you are right, my dear," said Lady van Vlooswyk. "The ways of the Lord are indeed wonderful. How much—" The sudden stopping of the wagon interrupted the lady's speech.

It had become completely dark, and yet the travelers had not emerged from the forest. The two gentlewomen naturally supposed that something was wrong about the wagon, and they bent over to the wife of Joris to inquire what it was. While the others were conversing the latter had taken the opportunity to hurl at the head of the much-enduring manikin an occasional admonition or precept from the Bible, or, as Joris called it himself, had

read him many an epistle. When she perceived that the horses were checked and stood still, she nearly pushed the driver off the seat in her endeavor to lean far enough out of the vehicle to have a good look at Joris's proceedings.

"But, Joris, what are you up to now?" she exclaimed. "Are you holding the horses? What does that mean?"

"I heard the sound of approaching hoofs," replied the husband, "and we have need of being a little cautious in this dark forest.—Hey, there! who goes there?" he called, aloud, peering into the darkness before him.

"A friend!" was the reply.

At the same time appeared within the glare of the torch a man on horseback who was at once recognized by Joris as Major Gapertz, and heartily saluted by him, as he was not a little relieved to find there was no cause for alarm; besides, he knew the major was to form one of their party, and this addition to their forces materially lessened his fears for the remainder of the journey.

"The baroness Van Vlooswyk is in the wagon, Joris, is she not?" inquired the major.

"Yes, major, and the little Walburgius and his mother are with her also."

"Ah, indeed! Your estimable wife?"

Joris was about to reply, but the major had now come close to the wagon and begun his salutations

to the high-born lady and the other woman within.

"Everything is arranged, noble lady," he said. "I have carried out your orders without betraying your coming to the one from whom it was to be kept secret."

"And where is—"

"Do you mean my friend Walter Harmsen, Lady Jacoba? I parted from him this afternoon at the Wassenaar lane. He thought I was going straight to The Hague, but in this he was mistaken; for no sooner was I out of his sight than I turned my horse's head and rode back to the country-seat of Lord Marnix to announce your coming."

"Then they have only recently received word as to our probable arrival?" asked Jacoba, with some concern.

"I could not do otherwise, dear lady," laughed the major, "if I would faithfully carry out your intentions; for I was not to awaken any suspicion in the mind of our friend Walter, you know. It was hard enough to preserve my innocence, too, when I had to listen to your letter and receive the news of your coming as if I did not know you were hereabouts already. But if I had let out a single hint of it to little Walburg while Walter was still near her, it could not have been kept secret a moment; for while, of course, she would not have spoken of it, it would have beamed from

her face and eyes. I had to wait, therefore, till Walter had gone. Then I had to go with him to the point where our ways separated, and hurry back to our friends again. But now all are in readiness for your reception, and, according to agreement, I have ridden to meet you and be your escort through this dark forest."

"I am really very grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken," said Lady Jacoba. "But now I have a reward for you too in the shape of a surprise. Here in the wagon with me is a lady with whom I will make you acquainted if you will come and ride with us."

The major alighted from his horse and, not without some difficulty, ascended the wagon. A chair had been provided for him near the seat occupied by the two ladies; and when he was comfortably settled in his place—Joris, meanwhile, taking charge of the major's faithful steed—the Lady Jacoba introduced him to her Flemish friend and continued:

"When I called at your residence and arranged with you for this surprise to Mr. Harmsen, I did not know that you were the very person I should have applied to in the case of my friend. We had purposed to let her arrival remain unknown for a few days that we might have the advantage of secrecy in our endeavors to realize her hopes, and so I made no mention of her; but on my way back

to our stopping-place I met Joris Ruikmans in the street. It was not difficult for me to recognize him, and he was overjoyed when I made myself known to him. We happened to be near his shop, and nothing would satisfy him but I must make the acquaintance of his wife. Of course I had not long been in the house of Joris before he brought to me his foster-son, of whom he is not a little proud; that led to explanations which at once arrested my attention and filled my heart with an overflowing gratitude to God. I hurried back to my friend, and, gradually preparing her mind for the happy encounter which might be in store for her—yet in which, after all, she might be cruelly disappointed—we set out together to visit the house of Joris. When we were approaching the door, who should be coming from another direction to the same point but the woman or housemaid who in the very night six years ago when the great misfortune of her life befell her came to her and gave her information of an encouraging kind, but yet not such as to put her in the way of remedying her grief!”

“You are purposely speaking in riddles, it seems, my dear lady,” observed the major, “although I begin to feel my way toward your meaning, especially with Walburgius before me in the arms of your friend.”

“Yes, but you must not jump at conclusions,”

laughed Jacoba; "you must hear every detail of the wonderful circumstances, and then you may speak your mind. Well, then," she continued, seriously, "at the siege of Steenwyk this lady was separated from her husband and her child. The girl we met at Joris's door informed her that the child's nurse had been killed, but that the child was not. More she did not or would not tell then, but now she told my friend that the boy who had been adopted by you and brought up by Joris and his wife was her child, for she knew that it had been carried to these parts, and had been taken in charge by the two officers who led the troops that were to prevent the reinforcement from entering the city; but she had not learned these particulars till after she had seen the lady. My friend could scarcely contain herself, but at last we mustered nerve and strength sufficient to enter the house. One glance at the boy satisfied the mother's heart, and it was truly a happy sight to see the glad reunion."

"The memory of it will never depart from me," said the Flemish lady, at this juncture.—"I was not to speak, major, till Lady Jacoba had made you acquainted with our success, but what can I say in gratitude for all you have done for my child?"

"Say nothing, my dear lady; my best reward is your present happiness," said the major. "And to God, above all, should be given the glory of these

wonderful and merciful providences. But did you ever find your husband? I understand you were separated from him at the same time."

"Yes," answered the lady. "My husband, though severely wounded, was not dangerously hurt; he was just able to be moved when Steenwyk capitulated, and then, of course, I at once joined him, for I had learned from one of the soldiers who escaped with me that they had seen him carried into the town by the small number who succeeded in reaching the gates. It was not till the beginning of October, however, that he was barely strong enough to go upon a journey, and then at once he set out for these parts. We had received some obscure intimation that the child had been conveyed hither, but how or by whom we could not ascertain. But, alas! that effort to recover our child cost me the loss of my husband also; I never saw him again, nor did I learn what became of him. The woman whom I met at Joris's, however, told me of a young man who was murdered at Wyngaerden House about that time, and that there were taken from his body a ring and a girdle which were preserved by one of the murderers, and which she thought she could bring me. Should I see them, the identity between that unfortunate man and my husband would be established beyond a doubt."

A sudden eruption of mingled horror and grief checked the speaker's utterance.

"Your life, my dear lady," observed the major, "has indeed been checkered by great griefs and mercies ; but it behooves us to forget the grievous past in the happy issue of the present, and we shall trust that your boy may grow up to fill the place of both husband and son."

Meanwhile, the wagon had nearly reached the place where the Wassenaar lane crossed the road. Suddenly there was seen approaching from the direction of the sandhills the light of several torches, accompanied by the sound of horses' hoofs and the voices of several men.

Major Gapertz quickly left the wagon and mounted his horse. Directing the driver and Joris to hold the horses and remain where they were, he rode into the woods on the side of the road to ascertain what this meant.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHERIFF AND HIS PRISONERS.

THE major had not ridden far when he was met by a person on horseback who was accompanied by a servant carrying a lighted torch.

“Who goes there?” cried the major, who was accustomed to command.

“Respect for the law!” sounded the reply. “I am the sheriff of Leyden, Mr. Loth Huyghens Gael.”

The major, who was a personal friend of this dignitary, at once rode up to him and made himself known, informing the sheriff that he was conducting two ladies to the house of Lord St. Aldegonde.

“We have made a fortunate catch, major,” the sheriff communicated, on his part; “we have arrested the greatest villain of this place. We had come out to secure some other rogues, but these must have suspected our coming and made their escape. But I have sent my constables after them, and I should not wonder if we get them too this same night. But, as I have said, we caught the biggest rascal of all. We also have with us a poor sinner

whom we are carrying along out of mere pity. The miserable wretch is sick unto death, and we are trying to get him as far as the farm of peasant Allers, so that he may be made comfortable there, though I fear he will not reach it alive. I told you we were doing this for simple pity, for he deserves at once to be taken to prison, because he is as much a rogue as any of the others ; but we show him this mercy out of consideration to the wishes of your friend."

"Of *my* friend?" inquired the major, somewhat surprised.

"Yes. You have a friend by the name of Walter Harmsen, have you not?" said the sheriff. "There he is among the constables yonder who are conveying the sick man."

"How?" cried the major, in surprise. "Is my friend Harmsen here? I thought he would be at home with the family of Lord Marnix by this time." Thus saying, he turned and rode back to the wagon, informing the occupants that Walter Harmsen was of the party which they had encountered.

Lady Jacoba rose from her seat, and she as well as the Flemish lady and the wife of Joris, with the boy, descended from the wagon.

"There they come," said the sheriff, pointing to a number of men slowly moving along a wooded sandhill.

At the same instant a yell as of a madman rose upon the night-air, mingled with remonstrances from the constables.

"It is a difficult job to keep this man under control, Mr. Sheriff," said one of them, who with two or three of his fellows was holding an old man by the arms.

"There, major! this is the most wicked of all the villains I have ever had to deal with," said the dignitary.

The eyes of the party were directed to the person thus designated.

"Why, it is the steward of Wyngaerden House!" exclaimed Joris.

"Let me go!" yelled the prisoner, furiously struggling to tear himself from the grasp of his captors. "I must go home; the dead man is waiting for me. St. Luke's day is at hand."

"It seems to me," said the major, "that the man is insane."

"Then he must have very suddenly become so," said the sheriff. "He is an old rascal, cunning as a fox, and has played many a sharp trick on us before. But look! there comes the other party."

A few of the men were carrying a stretcher upon which lay Hugh. At the side of the sick man walked Walter, who addressed an occasional word to the sufferer.

Suddenly another scream burst from the stew-

ard, who was staring with wild fright at the child of the Flemish lady.

"It is he!" he shrieked. "Those are the same eyes with which he looked at me that night! Oh, it is he! it is he!" He made another desperate attempt to escape from the constables, the fitful light of the torches giving him the appearance of a wicked soul already suffering the pains of eternal torment.

"Take the villain away from here," commanded the sheriff, "and be careful not to let him put an end to his own life. I shall presently follow you."

The men in charge of the prisoner proceeded on their way to Leyden, but for several minutes the repeated cries and shrieks of the maddened steward could plainly be heard echoing through the woods.

"Mr. Harmsen," spoke the gentle voice of a woman close by the side of the evangelist, whose attention was wholly taken up with the pitiable object upon the stretcher, "have you, then, ever ears and eyes only for the unfortunate and the suffering?"

Walter quickly turned at these words; a strange emotion stirred his heart to its very depths.

"Jacoba! Lady Jacoba!" he stammered, when by the light of the torches he perceived the familiar winsome features.

"Yes, the same," said the lady, extending her hand. "Is not this a pleasant surprise?"

“I had not expected you so soon. But the Lord be praised that I see you here in safety ! It is a long, long time since we met.”

Walter now observed also the lady who accompanied Lady Jacoba, and was about to put a question in regard to her, when a sound proceeding from the stretcher drew every one's attention thither.

“Mr. Harmsen,” said the sheriff, who had gone to the side of the patient more out of delicacy to the feelings of the friends who met after so long a separation than from pity for the poor wretch who lay there—“Mr. Harmsen, will you have the kindness to come here? I believe your aid is needed more than that of the doctor.”

Walter immediately approached the sick man. It was a touching scene. Surrounded by a number of constables, some of whom held burning torches, while the major and the sheriff on horseback, and the women and Joris Ruikmans, stood near, poor Hugh lay upon the rude boards, a prey to violent nervous convulsions which left him weaker after every attack and were evidently bringing him to the brink of the grave.

“Mr. Harmsen,” said Hugh, with great difficulty, during an interval of quiet, “I believe that my end is near. I fear that eternity—”

“Why should you fear, Hugh ?” asked Walter, sympathizingly, taking the clammy hand of the patient in his own. “Have I not told you on the

authority of God's word that the Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners? He has saved millions who were his enemies and sinners—yes, even many who were liars and murderers—and came to him with sincere confession of their sins. The Lord Jesus loves with an everlasting love. You may not say that he will not save you, for it is just the will of God that you should be saved."

"I? I?" stammered Hugh. "I, who was—guilty of the blood—of that—stranger?"

"Listen carefully, Hugh, to what Paul, the persecutor—yes, perhaps, a murderer—of early Christians, has said: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.' Even as the Lord showed him mercy, he will do likewise with you; for he is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin. Believe this. If you believe not this, you commit the most grievous sin of all; for 'he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.'"

Hugh bowed his head upon his breast; it seemed as if these assurances had taken away all his obstacles to faith, although he had not sufficient confidence to make it known. With eyes nearly set in the fixedness of death he looked upon Walter, and said in a voice which betrayed the great fear that had possession of him,

“Stay with me; leave me not. You can do me—”

“Hugh,” interrupted Walter, firmly but kindly, “you think you can lean upon me, but remember that I am only a man saved by grace, just as you may be. Turn your confidence away from me and look to Jesus; he is the life, and he brings salvation: ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’ God delights in mercy; be not afraid to enter into death. Jesus is the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Walter ceased speaking to watch the evidences of approaching dissolution. The paleness of death spread over the countenance of Hugh, while he made a feeble attempt to fold his hands. His lips moved, and inaudibly to the spectators, except to the ear of Walter, he spoke, saying,

“Jesus—is my life—and salvation.” Then his lips closed for ever.

Ten minutes later Dame Ruikmans was once more seated by the side of the driver, who was hurrying his horses to the country-seat of Lord Philip St. Aldegonde; Lady Jacoba, Walburgius—as we shall continue to call him a little longer—and his mother occupied the second seat, as before. The Flemish lady had been made acquainted in brief words with the connection which the deceased Hugh had with her own misfortunes.

The major had ridden on with his friend the sheriff—the former, in order to advise the family of Lord van Marnix of the approach of their guests; the latter, in order to overtake the constables who were on their way to Leyden with the steward of Wyngaerden House. The constables who had carried Hugh were directed to convey the corpse back to Wassenaar, that it might there be buried in the village cemetery.

Walter walked by the side of Joris and took occasion to enter with the manikin upon another discussion in regard to the buying and selling of fine linen, and the evangelist expressed the hope that Hugh had profited by the teaching he had received, and had come into possession of that fine linen by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not far from their destination our travelers perceived coming toward them from the direction of Leyden some men with torches who seemed to be in great haste, and one of whom, on horseback, was soon recognized as the sheriff.

“Is the villain here?” asked the dignitary, stopping at the wagon.

“Who?” asked Walter and Joris in one breath. “We have seen no one.”

“Why, that wickedest of all miscreants, the steward of Wyngaerden House,” replied Mr. Gael, in great heat. “He escaped the hands of my constables, and must have concealed himself some-

where in this vicinity. But we will catch him again, and the others too.—Forward, men !”

Thus speaking, the sheriff put the spurs to his horse and dashed with his followers into the forest, while our friends pursued their way without further interruption.

Soon the wagon turned into the lane between the beeches and drew up before the stone steps of Lord Philip’s residence. The major and Walburg came to welcome the guests, the latter overjoyed that at last she was permitted to embrace Lady Jacoba, whom she had learned to love by correspondence with her. It was a matter of no small delight, also, that Walburgius had recovered his mother, and most heartily was the latter welcomed.

“Look,” said Walburg to the mother when they had gone into the house and the latter had been presented to the family—“look what was brought to the house here by a woman who gave her name as Aalt, with the request to hand it to you.”

The mother of Walburgius opened the package which the little maiden handed her, and found it contained—a ring and a girdle. They were those of her murdered husband. The identification was now indisputable.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF THE WICKED.

WE lost sight of Geert Herman and François Bardes at the moment that Walter Harmsen reached the cabin in the sandhills. They had determined to go directly to Wyngaerden House, having in view a twofold object—to recover the ring and the girdle, and to rob the money-chests of the steward during the absence of the latter in the sandhills. As they went, however, they discovered on the Rapers sandhill a number of men whose business they could not quite make out, but who they suspected might be officers of the law. They accordingly resolved to wait till night had fully come, and concealed themselves in the neighborhood until darkness should cover their evil purposes. When it was totally dark, they emerged from their hiding-place and cautiously approached Wyngaerden House. They had already crossed the little bridge, and were about to go to the rear of the mansion to force their way into the stone cellar through the window when they were suddenly confronted by a woman. It was Aalt. She had

forestalled the two thieves, having obtained access to the house while the steward was away, descended to the cell where she had had the struggle with the cloth-weaver, and while it was still daylight searched with great diligence for the articles lost on that former night. With the ring and the girdle in her possession, she was now on her way to leave them by appointment at the house of Lord Marnix, for the Flemish lady to determine whether they were her husband's or not.

"What are you doing here?" asked Aalt, fearlessly addressing the two robbers.

"Hush!" said Geert Herman, who was the less courageous of the two; "do not speak so loud. Do you not know that this old house has ears in it?"

"Yes, I know that," answered Aalt, "although these walls contain no ears that could make it so uncomfortable for you as those in the mill at Steenwyk."

"Keep still, Aalt," begged Herman.

"Why should I keep still?" said the woman, in biting tones. "You have done the most of your evil deeds, for Mr. Gael is upon your track."

"Oh, he will not find us," said Bardes, derisively; "we are safe here, and the sheriff is a good way off."

"Of course," assented the cloth-weaver. "We shall try our chance here for the last time, and then

we shall get away from these parts for good ; so Mr. Gael may whistle after us, if he will."

"Ha, ha, ha !" laughed Bardes. "How queer he will look when he hears of it !"

"Do not be so loud, Bardes," urged Geert, reproachfully.

"No, Bardes, keep quiet ; then perhaps our friend Geert will be able once more to hear the cries of pain and terror from that poor nurse who was killed by a pretended soldier in the old mill at Steenwyk to which she had fled with the child after being separated from its mother, and—"

"Hush !" spoke the cloth-weaver, in great alarm. "No one knows of it but you. The child came to no harm, and the mother is in The Hague ; she will soon find it again. So what hurt was done, after all ?"

"I will keep quiet after this," said the housemaid, "but others will not. Think about Mr. Gael."

"Listen," said Herman, with the cowardice of a murderer convicted of his misdeed. "Be still to-day ; to-morrow you may talk as much as you like."

"'To-morrow' ?" said the housemaid. "Are you so sure that you will be safe to-morrow ? You may be—"

"Oh, I know what you are going to say," said the cloth-weaver, mocking in his turn : "dead, you

meant. No, not this night. We want to have a good time of it first, and then— But come, Bardes; what is the use of us wasting our time here talking? Let us go on with our business. It is high time.”

So saying, the two highwaymen left the woman, and Aalt proceeded on her way, saying to herself, “Those villains! They imagine they are so safe, and they do not know that I have to-day revealed everything to the sheriff of Leyden, and that even now his constables are on their track. But, what is best of all, I have attained my object: I have found the ring and the girdle of which Hugh spoke so often, and which will be very acceptable to the Flemish lady.” She disappeared among the trees, and was soon upon the road leading to the residence of Lord van Marnix.

Meanwhile, Geert Herman and François Bardes had reached the window of the stone cellar. It was easily forced open, and after the cloth-weaver had pushed himself through Bardes followed his example. This was the apartment in which Herman had spent a part of the night between Saturday and Sunday, and here, of course, must be found the ring and the girdle. By the aid of a flintstone and tinder was lighted a small piece of candle, which the men placed in a dark-lantern. And now they began to search, but it need not be said that their search was in vain.

At length it struck the two villains that the housemaid must have been here before them, for the cloth-weaver remembered how much value she set upon the coveted articles. They grew furious at their own stupidity in not thinking of this while they were talking with her, and Geert swore that he would make her pay for this trick. They now gave up looking for the missing articles, and determined to ascend to the upper portions of the house, where the steward kept his treasures; but when they tried to open the door leading into the hall, they found it locked.

"That is wretched!" said the cloth-weaver.

"So it is," assented the Fleming. "What is to be done now? We cannot force that door open, for it is an iron one, and I see no other way of getting up stairs."

"But may there not be another door here?" said Geert, feeling along the walls. "I have heard that the steward had several vaults full of old stuff. Yes, here is a door," he continued, lifting his lantern, "but I find no keyhole. Wait; hold the lantern, and I will see whether the door is not one that slides up."

The door indeed seemed to be one of that kind. Placing their lantern on the floor, the two robbers united their energies, and after much labor succeeded in lifting the door high enough for them to creep under. After they had passed through into

the next vault the door slowly sank into its former position without their noticing it. The marauders found themselves in a room the floor of which was inlaid with red bricks; along the walls were suspended all sorts of weapons.

"Here is nothing of any value to us," said the cloth-weaver.

"There is for me," said the Fleming, taking down a long dagger and placing it upon his person. "This may be of some use."

"Come, let us get out of this vault, Bardes, and see if we can find a door that will lead us to a hall or a staircase. We must get up stairs; there is where the money is. Here is nothing but old stuff."

A door easily opened was indeed found; it led to a vault even larger than the one the men were in. They entered, but stepped back much more quickly than they had gone in; for, to their terror, they perceived that it contained several kegs of gunpowder, and some of the loose powder was scattered in heaps on the floor.

"Keep back your lantern, Bardes," quickly spoke Herman, "for one spark, and we— But hark! what do I hear?"

Both listened with bated breath, and soon they distinctly heard footsteps as of one who was greatly hurried.

"That must be the steward," whispered Geert Herman; "we have been too long."

“If it is he,” said Bardes, likewise speaking in low tones, “our chance is gone. I had confident expectations that Hugh would keep him a good long time with his nonsense about St. Luke’s, especially since that clerical gentleman came there, into the bargain. But hark ! what can he be doing ? He seems to be emptying his money-chest. It is a pity we too could not be there.”

The person up stairs, whoever he was, seemed to be determined to make a tremendous noise. He knocked tables and chairs over on the floor, ran like a wild beast around the room, rattled the locks, opened chests, threw the money-bags upon the floor, so that copper and silver coins rolled in every direction, and screamed at such a fearful rate that the two thieves looked at each other in astonishment, not knowing what could be the meaning of it. And how could they know ? They knew nothing of the teachings of Scripture concerning the wicked. They could not know that the steward of Wyngaerden House, whose heart was polluted by a thousand sins and weighed down by avarice and murder, and who had refused to place himself before God a confessed sinner beseeching his pardon, was now being goaded to madness by the poignant pricking of that same truth of God which might yet have saved him if he had heeded it in the morning. The awful remorse of an awakened conscience had seized upon him. He sought rest, and found

it not because he sought it not in the way that Hugh had done. At present, driven by the torments of remorse, and thinking he saw on all sides of him the form of the man whom he had murdered from love of gain, he dashed restlessly from place to place, although the lust after his goods and his money still remained with him. Therefore he rooted like a swine among his gathered treasures and filled his pockets full of money, only to cast it wildly away from him in the next instant when overcome by the fearful fancies of his disordered imagination. Suddenly he hurled himself from the room and, to the horror of the two robbers, came down into the hallway. His steps approached the vault in which they were. What should they do?

“Blow out the light, Bardes,” cried Geert Herman. “Quick! he must not see us.”

The Fleming did as bidden; the thieves were now in total darkness, and crept into a distant corner. Like a madman pursued by dogs the steward dashed down the steps. Another moment, and he was in the stone cell. He lifted up the sliding door and appeared, lamp in hand, in the apartment where the thieves lay crouching in a corner. How revolting was his aspect! His eyes were starting from their sockets and the terrors of hell distorted his features.

“Here it is!” he shrieked, standing in the centre

of the cell. "This is the spot—the grave! Here he is! St. Luke's! St. Luke's!"

The madman threw himself upon the red-brick floor, removed several of the bricks and with his hands began to dig in the earth beneath. Suddenly he stopped; he looked up as if he thought he had heard a noise.

"What is that?" he cried, springing to his feet. "Who is coming? Is it the officer of the law to convict and sentence me—Mr. Gael? No; I will have nothing to do with you. I fear you; I shall flee from you and go where you cannot pursue me. I will—"

Taking the lamp in his hand, the steward dashed into the next vault, the door to which had been left open by the highwaymen. The cloth-weaver and the Fleming uttered a loud scream; they saw the frenzied man enter the powder-magazine with the burning lamp. They sprang upon him to detain him and shrieked in terror and despair. The steward looked behind him, and, seeing the two forms starting from a corner and thinking they were officers of the law, he dashed still farther into the adjoining vault, threw the lamp from him into the midst of the gunpowder, and— A flame leaped up, followed by a loud hissing, a creaking of beams, a shaking of the ground as by an earthquake, accompanied by deafening thunder. In that same instant the miscreants observed the steward

throw himself into the flames; they turned to escape, but the foundations of the house trembled, the vaults burst asunder, the walls tottered on their bases, and with the rapidity of thought Wyngaerden House, with all that lived and breathed within it, flew into the air.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

WE take the privilege of the story-teller and advance our time by as much as nine years. This brings us to the year 1607, and may entitle us, before we proceed with the narrative of their individual histories, to bring in a few words regarding the history of Church and State in the country wherewith the fortunes of our friends were identified.

The republic of the Seven United Netherland Provinces of the North continued to prosper. Prosperity was theirs in a political as well as in a commercial sense. Several of the islands of the East Indies had been wrested from the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and a Dutch colonial empire began there to arise. The fact of independence, meantime, became daily more established. The prince of Orange, Maurice, the son of William the Silent, who had been made captain-general of the armies of the republic, had now the reputation of being the first general of his age; no city or citadel could resist the rapidity, force and irresist-

ible skill of his sieges. In the year 1600 the important and hard-fought battle of Nieuwport, in West Flanders—one of the obedient provinces of the South—had proved by the brilliant success on the side of the republic that Maurice was equally capable of sustaining his reputation in the field. The significant event that was consummated in 1609 was already being agitated and overtures entered upon to bring it about. This was the twelve years' truce—a cessation of hostilities between Spain and the Dutch republic, which the former eagerly desired in order to repair her energies wasted in an unsuccessful conflict of forty-one years with her revolted provinces.

In Church affairs events of great importance were also brewing. The sad controversies and the sadder divisions which led to the memorable and celebrated Synod of Dort, in the year 1618, had been going on for some years. In the year 1603 the brilliant scholar and learned theologian Arminius—whose acquaintance we made long ago in Utrecht as a fellow-student of Walter Harmsen—was called from his pastorate in Amsterdam to be professor of theology in the University of Leyden. Before this he had taken exception to some of the doctrines of John Calvin, and now he boldly enunciated his difference of opinion. The defence of Calvinism was taken up by theologians who adhered to the great Genevan Reformer's

peculiar views. Public discussions were held, bearing fruit in nothing but wider separation of hearts. But long before the controversy between Calvinism and the Arminianism that bore his name had reached its height Arminius had passed away, dying of a fever in October, 1609, when but forty-nine years of age. He was thus professor at Leyden at the time we resume our narrative.

While freedom in civil matters and a bold independence were more and more becoming established in the northern provinces, and while religious controversy, however deplorable in itself, yet indicated freedom and independence in matters of faith and opinion, a difference wide as the poles in all these particulars was observable between the southern Netherlands and those constituting the republic. The battle of Nieuwport was the result of a campaign organized rather unadvisedly, but with the intention of striking a blow that would restore liberty to the southern provinces. The battle, though itself a success, accomplished nothing toward the end in view, for the spirit of liberty seems to have been utterly crushed out of the southern people. His victory merely gave Maurice an opportunity to withdraw from the country with honor, and such an experiment was not afterward repeated. Spain continued its hold upon these its possessions; by the Treaty of Utrecht, in the year 1713, they were transferred like so much

personal property to Austria, and not till 1830 did these provinces become an independent country as the kingdom of Belgium.

Meanwhile, these provinces remained also within the pale of the papal Church. In the republic there was freedom of worship for all—Catholics as well as others; in the Spanish Netherlands, on the contrary, even at the time to which we have now brought our story, no adherent of the Reformation was tolerated. The Inquisition was still in force; the Jesuits, who had attained great power and influence in Church and in State, persecuted to the death every heretic they could get within their reach.

On a Sunday afternoon in the month of July, 1607, two men might have been seen leaving the city of Leyden, taking the road to the village of Voorschoten. The sun poured his burning rays upon them as they walked, and it was fortunate for them that at this time fashion had not as yet invented black silk hats, which, however elegant and dignified in their appearance, are nevertheless admirably calculated to aggravate the discomfort of the sun's heat. Both men wore low felt hats with drooping brims, somewhat in the shape of inverted wash-basins. The stiff, many-pleated, upright collar of an earlier date had given place to a broad flat collar lying upon the shoulders, tapering to two points in front and terminating in long

tassels. This later fashion permitted one to have the neck and throat open and free to the access of the air. A velvet vest closed up to the throat with black shining buttons, the graceful cloak hung loosely over the left arm, the ample breeches fastened at the knees with silver clasps and the black silk stockings which lost themselves in low shoes,—these will give the reader some idea of the dress of these two men. There may have been some difference in the cut or the quality of the cloth they wore, but the general costume was otherwise much the same. But a great difference was at once apparent between the two if we note what their countenances indicated. The one who allows his hand to rest affectionately upon the shoulder of his companion is a person of some forty-eight years; his bearing is manly and dignified, yet his eye bespeaks an extraordinary amiability, and the smile now playing about his mouth is so winning that one is constrained to love him even on first acquaintance. The young man at his side is evidently much his junior, and can scarcely count eighteen years. His face, somewhat dark of hue, as if burned by the sun, has an expression of seriousness or anxiety; and had not his eye betrayed a meek and lovable nature, one would have been inclined to believe this youth to be somewhat misanthropic, or, at least, one of an unhappy disposition. This was not by any means the case,

however. True, he did not possess the cheerfulness and the openness of his older friend, but one could readily discover that there beat an honest and sincere heart within him. He was, in fact, just that which a youth of his age should be—modest, gentle and more or less bashful.

“I rejoice greatly, Antoine,” began the elder of the two pedestrians when they had crossed the bridge over the Rhine, “that we can be together to-day. I had never expected to meet you in Leyden. How long have you been here?”

“About four weeks, Mr. Harmsen.”

“And why did not you announce your arrival earlier? You felt entirely certain, did you not, that you would meet with a cordial welcome from me?”

“Certainly, Mr. Harmsen,” replied the youth, pressing his friend’s hand: “I was most firmly convinced of that; but I deemed it better to wait quietly till you had returned. On the very day that I arrived in Leyden you had set out upon your journey, and in order to attract as little attention as possible and not to interfere with your plans I waited upon Mr. John Paedts Jacobson, the printer about whom you had told me last year at Monne, and he was willing to employ me at once in his shop.”

“I know it—I know it, Antoine,” said his friend, whom we have recognized to be Mr. Harmsen;

“Mr. John Paedts has told me all. I am only sorry that you had to spend so much time here without me, but I had promised my friends in Utrecht to pass a few weeks in their midst to study God’s word together and to go about with the gospel trumpet at my lips, hoping that many an ear might be opened to hear the invitation of the heavenly Voice. You may imagine how greatly surprised I was when Paedts mentioned your name. I at first thought that he had made a mistake’; but when he plainly told me that Antoine Moreau of Monne, in Flanders, was in town and in his employ, my delight knew no bounds, and to this you must ascribe my calling upon you so unexpectedly in your lodging this morning. But as yet you have told me nothing of your mother. How is she? Has she too learned to love the Lord Jesus? and is it with her consent that you came hither?”

At the hearing of these concluding words there came over the countenance of the youth a shadow as when one receives some sorrowful tidings; it followed in sad contrast upon the happy smile that played about his lips when Mr. Harmsen so frankly revealed his delight at meeting him. He grasped his friend’s hand and said,

“Ah, Mr. Harmsen, you cannot know how much I suffer on my dear mother’s account. Her image is continually before me. Whenever I cast myself, wearied after my day’s work, upon my bed, I see

her as it were standing before me and weeping because I have left her."

"How? left her? Without her consent?"

"Yes, and no. But let us seek a resting-place in the shade of yonder bushes, and I will tell you all."

The pedestrians directed their steps to the point indicated, but did not observe that on the side of the road some one stealthily followed them and hid himself in the bushes close by the place where Harmsen and Moreau had seated themselves.

"Do you remember, Mr. Harmsen," began Antoine, "the day I first met you?"

"Yes, very well. I was returning from a journey to France. With much difficulty and after great peril I had reached Courtray, and, as I did not deem myself safe in that city, I went to Monne."

"The village where I lived," said the youth, sadly. "Oh, Mr. Harmsen," he continued as a sigh escaped him, "upon the whole earth there is no place more lovely to me—not only because my mother lives there, but also because it was there that I first learned the truth that Jesus is my Saviour. Although it is more than a year ago, I remember as well as if it had happened yesterday the very spot near our little village church where first I met you. I was at that time very much troubled in mind."

"True. You had just had a conversation with your priest, Father Benedictus, I believe, and you told me what had passed between you."

At the mention of the priest's name the person who had concealed himself behind the bushes lifted his head among the leaves and strained every nerve to listen. Before we follow this rather unworthy example—which we will do, however, later on—we must tell our readers what Walter Harmsen already knew and they do not know.

Who, then, is this young man, Antoine Moreau? He is an old friend under a new name. The name by which we knew him before was not his real one. "Walburgius Steenwyk" did well enough while he was still the foundling and the soldier's ward; but when he was recovered by his mother, that rather inharmonious designation became superfluous.

Antoine Moreau, then, went back with his mother, Madame Moreau, to his home, in Flanders, after a few days spent among the friends who had been so kind to him. We have learned from words dropped by his father at his violent death, and from the conversation of his mother with the Lady Jacoba in the wagon, that his parents were indeed, as Dame Ruikmans had suspected, adherents of the Romish faith. The mother had been open to conviction while in contact with the Baroness van Vlooswyk, but, returned to her own

country, she soon yielded to the influences of her surroundings, and former impressions departed from her. She had a daughter some three years older than Antoine who had been left in Flanders with relatives while the officer took his wife and younger child to the scene of war in the North. As this daughter grew into womanhood she became imbued with a narrow and zealous religious spirit which made her an intolerant devotee to the Catholic faith and filled her with implacable hatred toward those who departed from the Romish Church. By her forceful mind she acquired a great influence over her mother and hopelessly drove from her mother's mind all former tolerance of heretic doctrines. With these two to guide his education, the little Antoine during his most impressionable years was thoroughly purged from any of the lingering effects of Dame Ruikmans's not very amiable training in the faith of Calvin. When, therefore, he had attained the age of sixteen or seventeen, he was as staunch a Catholic as were any of his contemporaries who had never lived in a Protestant country nor been subjected to Reformed baptism; but the Lord had set his mark upon him, and would have him for his own.

When Antoine was seventeen years old, he came across certain pages of a volume that had been torn to pieces with the evident design of burning it. Among other things, it was here announced that

Jesus Christ was the only Mediator between God and man, that his precious blood cleansed from all sin, and that, therefore, there was nothing to be done but to believe in Jesus; so that fasts, vigils, prayers, penances, were all foreign to the true way of salvation. These declarations did not seem entirely new to Antoine; they awakened in his memory a chord which was sufficient to set him thinking very seriously. His priest, Father Benedictus, with whom he was pursuing certain studies and who wished to educate him for the Church, had never taught him any such doctrine, but he supposed that the Father might perhaps teach them to him when he should be farther advanced. Antoine accordingly took the papers to the priest and asked him what he was to think of their contents. The effect upon the priest was quite startling to Antoine. He snatched the papers out of the boy's hands, tore them to pieces with a countenance livid with wrath, and threw them into the fire, saying that Apollyon, the chief of the devils, had caused these papers to fall into Antoine's hands. To purify him from their infection he was commanded to do penance by walking about the church three times a day for a week with a consecrated taper, at the same time calling upon St. Joseph, in the hope that this saint would deliver him from all contamination with heretics and their writings. He did faithfully all that Father Benedictus appointed, but from that

moment peace forsook his soul. He could not get his thoughts away from what he had read ; deeply as he pondered, pray as he would to Mary, Joseph and other saints, the unrest of his soul remained the same. The only relief he found was in repeating to himself as nearly as he could remember the words which had been read—that faith in the work and the merits of Christ is the sole condition of salvation.

Antoine had not shown those papers to either his sister or his mother, but on a certain day when he felt particularly anxious and oppressed in heart he went to his mother's room. Fortunately, he found her alone. Perhaps she could read in his face what secret misery he was enduring, for, taking him by the hand, she drew him toward her, embraced him and, wiping the tears from his cheeks, asked him the cause of his trouble. He told her that he was seeking rest for his soul and could find it nowhere.

“Why,” she said, “pray to our holy mother Mary ; she is the queen of heaven and will assuredly give you rest.”

Antoine told his mother, with tears and broken voice, that he had done so for months, but in vain. It seemed as if the holy Mary could not help him, and yet he *must* get help, for otherwise his life was insupportable. His mother, patient and kind as she was, then counseled him to speak to Father Benedictus about this matter, as perchance through his

intercession he should obtain forgiveness of sins, and therefore, also, peace. The boy shook his head when she spoke thus, and then told her about the papers he had found, telling her some of the sentiments therein expressed. Scarcely had he done so when his mother arose and regarded him with a look of terror such as he had never before seen upon her face. The poor lady feared for the terrible consequences of reading such documents. When his sister learned the circumstances, life became quite unendurable, for she chose to consider it a willful turning to heretical views.

It was at this juncture that Walter Harmsen had found Antoine. As we learned from his words a moment ago, he was returning from a visit to Jacoba in France. Reaching Courtray, he dared not stay in the city, but, knowing that Madame Moreau resided in the village of Monne, not far from that city, he repaired thither. As the evening was falling Antoine had gone to the churchyard. He there fell prostrate and prayed God to grant him the assurance of his grace, to leave him no longer in uncertainty and doubt ; he besought him to send him some one with whom he might converse upon the state of his mind. When somewhat quieted by this exercise of prayer he rose, and as he was leaving the churchyard he saw standing beneath one of the willows a man whom he recognized even in the

failing light. It was Walter Harmsen. He made himself known to this friend of his boyhood's protector, to the no little gratification of Walter. We need not say that he had found the friend in need, that after a few fervent words of instruction and of prayer the faith of Antoine was confirmed and his belief in the evangelical views of salvation established.

The two communed together the greater part of the night ; for when Walter Harmsen learned the state of mind of Antoine's mother and sister and the watchfulness of Father Benedictus, he judged it safe neither for Antoine nor for himself to make known his presence.

As Walter and Antoine seated themselves in the shade on the side of the road Walter said,

"You have good cause to remember the events of those days ; it was a critical period in your life. But now tell me what happened to you after I separated from you, and what is the reason you left your mother and came to Leyden."

CHAPTER XXI.

ESCAPED FROM THE INQUISITION.

“**I** WILL endeavor to do so,” said the youth ;
“and may the Lord give me strength to endure the pain it will cause me to recall that sorrowful past ! I will not need to remind you of our conversation, continued through nearly that entire night ; every word you spoke to me concerning Jesus the Saviour was to me as a draught of water to a thirsty soul. The next day we could not meet because we had to avoid the suspicious espionage of Father Benedictus, my sister and—my own mother ! Ah ! what sort of religion can that be which teaches a mother to hate her child ?”

Antoine Moreau was forced to cease speaking for a few moments, and while Harmsen sought to cheer him with a timely word the man who was concealed in the bushes took advantage of the opportunity to approach still nearer.

“Two nights in succession we were enabled to converse together undisturbed. On the third, after you had left, I went to the same spot, and there, alone with God, I gave myself wholly to Jesus.

Oh, no one but a child of God can understand the feeling of joy which from that moment took possession of me. I was as a slave whose chains are broken and who suddenly enjoys full freedom.

“This change in my condition could not long be concealed from my mother. Fortunately, the Lord ordered it that I must go on some particular business to Antwerp, and thus during a few months I was relieved of the presence of Father Benedictus. But I had scarcely returned home when my sister’s suspicions were awakened anew. While I was asleep she had found the Confession of the Reformed Church in some corner where I had concealed it. She showed it triumphantly to my mother, accused me of heresy, declared she would have nothing more to do with me, and to such a degree stirred up mother against me that I could use no reason with her. Still, I succeeded in telling her what had taken place in my soul and how the Lord Jesus Christ had granted me his peace.

“If I had had strife in my heart before, my mother now began to have her share of it, although it was of an entirely different character. She saw the fearful danger to which I had exposed myself, and suspected aright that if Father Benedictus knew all he would accuse me before the Inquisition and I would undoubtedly be thrown into prison and put to death. I was her only son, and she loved me tenderly. The conflict between her love for me

and what she supposed to be her duty toward the Roman Catholic Church must have been very painful. At least, she grew paler day by day; traces of mental sorrow were visible upon her countenance, and often did I hear her sigh upon her bed at night. She would frequently wring her hands as she sought to dissuade my sister from fulfilling her repeated threats to accuse me to Father Benedictus."

The youth was silent for a few moments, and gave way to his feelings.

"Matters could not long remain in this state," he continued; "an end *must* come to all these annoyances, this conflict, these threats and persecutions of my sister, which went on day and night without ceasing. Upon a certain day, having conceived some special provocation on account of my mother's love for me, furious because she still hesitated to thrust the heretic from her house and home, my sister went to Father Benedictus, told him all and put into his hands the little book which she had stolen from me. Father Benedictus had long been in search of some excuse to get possession of my person, and his mind was at once made up. He laid accusation against me before the vicar-general of the Jesuits, and scarce twenty-four hours after the accusation a company of sixty soldiers appeared in Monne with orders to seize me and conduct me bound to the Inquisition prison.

In this critical moment, however, mother's love triumphed over every scruple. No sooner had my sister entered the house, saying with diabolical joy upon her face that now the heretic would be taught something besides Reformed lies, than mother uttered a terrible cry, drew me with the swiftness of thought to her sleeping-room, and ere my sister was aware of what she was doing provided me with a bag full of money, motioned to me to leap from her window, and without speaking a word pointed to a piece of woods opposite. I pressed a kiss upon her cold forehead, leaped to the ground without accident, and escaped my persecutors. But my poor mother! Oh, I am assured that—"

The youth hid his face in his hands and could proceed no farther.

"Poor woman!" said Mr. Harmsen. "How sad it is that she is so blinded by superstition! But a mother who can love you as she does may not be inaccessible to your persuasion of her to the truth of salvation."

"Oh, I wish to believe so," replied Antoine, eagerly; "gladly would I sacrifice my life if I could but be sure of effecting her salvation. But you wish to know how I came here. I went directly to Holland, but you may imagine I did not reach it without incurring dangers. The Lord was with me, however, and about four weeks ago I reached Leyden in safety. Perhaps you do not remember

that in the course of our conversations during those never-to-be-forgotten nights we were together you had mentioned the name of John Paedts, bookseller at Leyden?"

"Oh yes; I recollect it very well, for I told you that he was one of my dearest friends and that I had met him at the house of my distinguished friend Philip of Marnix. As you know now, he last year published a fine edition of the Bible."*

"Yes, I know," said Antoine, "and I have both volumes of it. I carry them always about with me, and have often been refreshed by reading them."

"I am rejoiced to hear it. But tell me: have you not learned to like Mr. John Paedts?"

"Yes; you did not exaggerate his good qualities. He received me very cordially and expressed much sympathy with me. He thanked the Lord that I

* I have in my possession a Bible with the following inscribed upon the title-page: "BIBLIA: That is, all the Holy Scriptures, thoroughly and faithfully translated into Dutch. With explanation of obscure words, phrases and sayings, and diverse readings which are found in other excellent translations, and are here placed in the margin. Also, with full references to similar or contrasted passages, indicated with the greatest reliability by chapter and verse (as every chapter is subdivided after the manner of the Hebrew). At Leyden, John Paedts Jacobson and John Bouwenson. Anno M.D.XCIX." This Bible was published in two volumes printed in very small type and of convenient size to carry in the pocket.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

had escaped so great a peril, for without doubt I should have been condemned by the Inquisition, and probably my sister, like the peasant at the burning of John Huss, would have aided in the preparations for my torture, under the supposition that thereby she was rendering a signal service to God. Poor sister !”

“You may well say ‘Poor sister !’” observed Mr. Harmsen. “Ah ! there have been, and are, so many who think to do God a service by persecuting to the death those who are his people ! Truly, it is sad. But it is God’s way to bring his children through many tribulations into the kingdom. We may comfort ourselves with this reflection, being well assured that in the end a crown of rejoicing awaits us, and that upon the soil that will hold our mortal remains the people of these Netherlands shall at one time serve the Lord Jesus Christ in perfect freedom. But tell me, now : what are your intentions or prospects for the future ? You are employed by Mr. John Paedts ?”

“Yes. Almost as soon as I made myself known to him Mr. Paedts took me into his employ, and, although at first I was somewhat awkward at the trade, I get along very well now. But as to my intentions or prospects I can say nothing ; I must let myself be guided by circumstances.”

“And do you think you are safe here in Leyden ?” asked Harmsen. “Are you sure that Fa-

ther Benedictus and the Jesuits will not follow you as far as this and seek to take you by force or guile? You cannot trust the Jesuits. They resemble Satan, who at times appears like an angel of light. I believe that there are still in this city a number of Jesuits and secret spies of Spain and the Inquisition who lie in wait to entrap the innocent."

At these words the person hidden in the bushes lifted his head, but let no word escape him.

"That is very likely," replied Antoine Moreau, "although as yet I have met no one who sought to do me any harm. On the contrary, I enjoy the goodness of the Lord in abundant measure, and I would be quite happy could I once in a while see my mother. Ah! who knows how greatly she is suffering on my account? Could I but tell her how blessed I am in the Master's service, with what joy I await his coming, perhaps she too would take up her cross and follow him. I do not think I shall be very long able to endure separation from her. Oh, pray the Lord with me that I may speedily hear some news of her, and that circumstances may so conspire that I shall see her."

"Trust in the Lord, dear Antoine, but be careful and do not anticipate his designs nor force circumstances according to your own will rather than await his. Be as prudent as you can. I feel as if some danger were threatening you. But should it ever happen—which the Lord prevent!—that your

enemies get you within their reach, be assured that you will find in me a brother and a friend who will do all he can for you."

The youth took both of Harmsen's hands and, lifting them reverently to his lips, covered them with kisses. He felt how infinitely much, under God, he owed to Harmsen, and unspeakable gratitude and love beamed from his eyes as he said,

"I know it—I know it; and should it be that your presentiment prove correct, I hope that you will find me submissive to the will of the Lord."

"Do you like your lodgings?" continued Harmsen, after a pause.

"Yes; I am with a widow whose name is Van Dyck. She is a godly woman, but almost always ill. Her husband was a weaver; he died of consumption about a year ago. But must we not proceed with our walk? Methinks your friends will be expecting you. I am longing to be in the midst of the brethren. What time shall we get to Voorschoten?"

"The appointment was at five o'clock, at the farm of Dirk Broeks, where we will also meet the wagonmaker Ledeganck, of Wassenaar. Perhaps we shall find there some friends from The Hague—certainly, Dame Ruikmans. How glad she will be to meet you there! You remember that I asked you if you had heard of or met her husband, who is employed in the bishop's prison at Tournay."

“Yes. I am sorry I did not know of it before, for I always remember with pleasure the days he acted as my foster-father.”

“Yes, and I too like him very much, and with judicious management he would undoubtedly have come to the knowledge of the truth. He was, in fact, not far from the kingdom of God, but his wife was too rigidly orthodox; her severity discouraged Joris. Of a sudden he was gone, and now, alas! he is in the midst of Romish surroundings. Yet I cannot believe that he is quite lost to the Reformed Church, and I think if I could have a word with him he might be reclaimed. We cannot force sinners to accept Jesus; slowly, patiently, prayerfully and with the exercise of much self-denial must this be done. But now we must go on.”

Walter Harmsen and Antoine Moreau then arose and continued on their way to Voorschoten, the steeple of whose church they could already discern in the distance.

The friends had proceeded about two hundred paces, when the person who had hid himself in their vicinity left his place of concealment in the bushes, looked after them through the leaves and branches as far as he could see them, and then as fast as his feet could carry him ran back to Leyden.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE JESUIT AND HIS TOOLS.

THE man whom we saw leaving the bushes by the roadside went on toward the city, and on the way ran with seeming heedlessness against a person who was complacently observing the leaves of a certain tree and occasionally knocking off a caterpillar. He was apparently so absorbed in this occupation that the rest of the world seemed as nothing to him, but one accustomed to read countenances could have seen that this man cared just as little for the beauty of the foliage as for the fate of the furry caterpillars which he so mercilessly crushed under his foot. His body stood there near the tree and its leafy adornment, but his mind was busy with quite other matters. From time to time he cast stealthy but quick and penetrating glances along the road to Voorschoten, while he muttered to himself:

“If only Willebrordus does not spoil things by his imprudence! He is sly enough and well calculated to aid us in our undertaking, but he is apt to upset us all by his eagerness to do his best.

But see ! there is some one coming. Can it be he ? Probably, for I cannot mistake his swaggering gait. But I must act as if I did not notice him. He knows I am to wait for him here, and our understanding is that if he has gained any valuable information he shall run up against me as if by accident. I must not awaken suspicion, and must observe the precept of our superior, Philip Derot : ‘Never let others know just what you are doing when the interest of the Church is involved.’”

The man had scarce concluded these reflections when the person whom we saw concealed behind the bushes ran up against him with such force that the killer of caterpillars was thrown against the trunk of the tree under which he had been standing and lacked but little of being knocked down.

“Softly, softly, my friend !” he said, with affected anger, when he perceived that several persons had stopped and were laughing at the apparent stupidity of the new-comer. “You had better keep your eyes open ;” and at the same time he continued in a whisper that could be heard only by his assailant : “All right ! Go on to the house, and I will follow by another way.”

The man pretended to offer an excuse and ran on a trot through the crowd, which jeered after him as he went, while the lover of trees slowly walked off in an opposite direction.

It will be expedient that we first learn something more particular about these two persons before we go to the house to which both wended their footsteps.

The man whom we found engaged in killing caterpillars counted about forty years of age, and was, accordingly, in the full vigor of his days. If we are to judge of the full vigor of one's days, however, by a corpulent body, a double chin, rounded cheeks and hands like pincushions, this man could not be said to have arrived at this stage, for he was as lean as a post. His countenance seemed like that of one who was dying of a rapid consumption, being marked by the sallowness of its skin, drawn tightly over the prominent cheek-bones and the jaws. The nose was long and beaklike; the mouth, wide with very thin lips; the chin, almost square and projecting over the meagre neck like a precipice over a gaping abyss; the ears were conspicuously large and hung like a pair of flesh-colored flaps at the side of the head; the eyes, on the contrary, were small, but lively in expression. The dress was that of a simple burgher—not at all remarkable, and certainly not of a character to announce that this man was Florentius Digo, one of the most astute men that ever belonged to the society of Jesuits.

The man who had been playing eavesdropper was much younger; he might have been about twenty-two years of age. The first impression

which his countenance made upon the careful observer was not apt to be a favorable one. There was such a mingling of cunning with what seemed even stupid or simple that one was led to the conclusion that the man was double-faced. He had never known a father or mother, and seemed not to have a relative belonging to him. He followed to some extent the trade of cloth-weaver, like so many of the laboring classes in Leyden, but as he had little relish for a sedentary life and a fixed occupation, and as the factory-hands made much sport of him on account of his so-called innocence, he worked very seldom at his trade, but preferred to tramp it through the country much like a dog that has lost its way and goes sniffing along the streets or the roads trying to find his home or to pick up food as he goes. And even as a hungry cur generally manages to pick up enough to keep him alive, so it happened with Willebrordus Groothurrelbrink, in which name he rejoiced. The chief subject of sport for his companions in factories was a defect of speech of Brordus Groot, as people usually called him. He could not easily pronounce the letter *r*, but often made of it a sound something like a *w*. For instance, if required to tell his name in full, he would say that it was Willebwoddus Gwoothuwelbwink. It may be imagined what a fruitful source of sport this was for the weaver's journeymen and how often they found occasion to make him tell his

full name, of which he was rather proud, always inwardly resenting the briefer and more convenient form which people took the liberty to use.

Brordus Groot, being much at large and ready for any kind of employment, was seldom out of a job. Not far from the alley where he found a lodging of some sort a stranger had recently come to occupy rooms in the house of an apothecary. This person, though but plainly dressed, seemed to have a long purse. He had need of some one to brush his clothes and shoes, and Brordus was exactly his man. From shoeblack he rose to the rank of messenger, and pretty soon he imagined he was quite well advanced in the confidence of the stranger, who was none other than Florentius Digo, but who, it need not be said, left Groot very far from understanding his real designs.

Florentius Digo had rented the front rooms of a small house which belonged to a certain Melchior van Walle, who formerly kept an apothecary's shop, but who, after he had dosed people until he was rich, had given up business and occupied a small back room in the same house. This Melchior did not enjoy the very best of reputations; there was even a suspicion abroad that he was in league with the Jesuits who were engaged in the conspiracy to assassinate Prince Maurice in 1598. Melchior van Walle had a perfect understanding with Florentius Digo, and, although they were never seen together in

public, there could be no question that they were in frequent conference within the house, and that they planned much mischief together.

As soon as Brordus had crossed the threshold of his master's rooms he took up a coat and went down to the little court where he was accustomed to brush Digo's clothes. Scarce had Melchior, whose window opened upon this little yard, perceived his presence there, than he raised the window and asked in the most insinuating tones,

"Well, Brordus, did you have good luck?"

The one addressed—who was not at all partial to Melchior, because he was very miserly and never did him any favors—acted as if he had not heard him, and brushed the collar of his master's coat as if he would tear it to pieces.

"Well, Brordus," Melchior repeated, "did you have any luck?"

"You old miser!" growled Brordus between his teeth; looking up, he spoke aloud: "No, but even if I had, I would not tell you, because Mr. Florentius has ordered me not to tell anything without his consent."

"But why not, Willebrordus?" asked the landlord, still in very friendly tones, and using the full name to please the other. "Your master will surely not object to your telling *me*, for I am as much interested in the matter as he. Tell me, therefore, I beg of you, whether they went to

Voorschoten together and what time they intend to return."

There was no reply. Brordus kept on brushing with all his might, and occasionally dropped his brush, so that he need not look his questioner in the face.

"And suppose I offer you a pot of beer and a roll of toasted bread? Methinks such things would be to your taste after your walk."

"'A pot of beew and a woll of bwead'?" repeated Brordus, with deliberation, looking askance at Melchior. "Whewe have you those things?"

"Here, inside," replied the apothecary, pointing to his table. "Put your foot on that curbstone and see for yourself; it is all ready for you if you choose to take it."

"There will not be any too much of it, vewy likely," said Brordus, taking his brush again after looking as desired, although the thirst after some beer was pretty strong; "you have doubtless dwank the most of it, and thought the dwegs are for the wicked."

"You are always thinking evil, Brordie," said Melchior, familiarly. "Here! take the can into your hands and judge for yourself whether I tell truth or not."

The whilom apothecary went to the table, took up a well-filled can and showed it to Brordus, whose obstinacy was quite overcome by the sight;

it was too tempting altogether. Looking eagerly at the can, he asked,

“Can I have the whole of it?”

“Certainly, provided you tell me something that I did not know before.”

Brordus considered a moment or two, and then told all that he had seen and heard upon the road to Voorschoten; after which, he put out his hands for the can of beer.

“Hold!” said Melchior, putting the can behind him; “you cannot have it yet. You must first tell me something I did not know before.”

“And have I not told you everything?” inquired Brordus.

“Yes, that may be; but I knew all that before.”

Brordus looked as much astonished as if some one had told him that Prince Maurice had turned Catholic. How was it possible that Melchior could know anything of what took place scarcely an hour ago on the road to Voorschoten, when the apothecary had not been from home at all?

“You knew that before?” Brordus asked, half in wonder, half in anger. “How can that be?”

“I dreamed it all last night,” replied Melchior, dryly; for from the first he had had no idea of parting with the beer.

Brordus took a step or two backward.

“‘Dreamed it’!” he exclaimed.

"Yes, dreamed it," was the curt reply; and the apothecary lowered the sash and went back to the table to finish his meal.

Brordus was furious when he saw how he had been taken in. He clenched his fist and stammered, red with anger,

"Misewable misew! Dwink your beew yourself; I will not have a dwop of it. But nevew shall I tell you anything again."

Melchior van Walle pretended not to hear Groot, poured out a glass of beer and waited for Florentius Digo to make his appearance. Soon his steps were heard in the hall. A few moments later Brordus entered the Jesuit's room and related to him what he had heard the two pedestrians say. Florentius gave his messenger some money for what he had done, with directions for another duty, and then dismissed him.

When Brordus had left, a knock was heard upon the door, and after a summons to come in Melchior entered the room of his tenant.

"I did not deceive myself," said the latter; "it is he. Father Benedictus gave me a very good description, and now that by means of Brordus I have arrived at a certainty I will devote a wax candle to Our Lady of Courtray in gratitude for having traced both him and that arch-heretic."

"The question now is," said Melchior, in a low tone, "how shall we get him back to Monne?"

Florentius looked at his landlord and read another query in his eyes: "What shall I get for my aid?"

"Oh, that question is easily answered," Digo replied. "I have all the requisite measures at command, and now that I know he is the person I want I have in my possession an infallible inducement to tempt him back. But I would gladly accomplish something more. According to information received, as well from Father Benedictus as from my superior, the friend of Antoine Moreau is the most dangerous heretic that lives. He has been the cause of Antoine's forsaking the faith of our Church, and thus it would be very desirable if we could get him into our power also, and could make them visit Monne together."

"Thus you want to kill two birds with one stone?" remarked Melchior, rejoicing much in the prospect.

"Exactly; that is the mind of the superior expressed in my commission. I will read the letter to you." He drew from one of his pockets a small key and opened a little closet. After examining a few papers he found a piece of parchment, and, running his eyes over its contents, he said, "Yes, this is the commission; listen as I read;" and, going to the window, he read as follows: "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam!** We commission Father Florentius Digo,

* "To the advancement of God's glory!"

our beloved son, to trace the person of Antoine Moreau of Monne, Flanders, who is an apostate from our Church, and to bring him to us, alive or dead. This Antoine Moreau has forsaken his mother's house, and, according to received information, is supposed to be in Leyden, Holland. He has been led astray by a certain Walter Harmsen, also resident at Leyden, but in the habit of traversing the land to delude the people with his heretic doctrines and draw them away from the true faith. Although it is of first importance to secure the person of Antoine Moreau, we nevertheless commission our beloved son, Father Florentius Digo, to spare no trouble to bring this man also before us—or, at least, to put him out of the way of continuing to spread his heresy. All brethren, members and servants of our society are hereby commanded to assist said Father Florentius Digo in this matter. Given at Tournay, anno 1607, the 30th of June.

“PHILIPPUS DEROT,
“*Superior S. J.*”

CHAPTER XXIII.

PREPARING THE SNARE.

“**Y**ES, two birds with one stone,” repeated Melchior, “but that will not be easy.”

“Oh, nothing is too difficult for us when we labor for the glory of God,” said the Jesuit. “We are taught to be patient, and we are never disappointed in our expectations. For the present we know sufficient for our purpose. We have our eye on their persons, and we must exercise prudence. It is now my first duty to secure Antoine Moreau; and if I fail to entice Walter Harmsen into our power, I must at least forestall any efforts on his part to prevent Antoine from going to Flanders.”

“Did you not say a while ago that you possessed an infallible inducement whereby to ensnare Antoine Moreau?” asked Melchior.

“Yes, that I have.”

“And what is it?”

“You will learn this later,” was Digo’s curt reply. “You are aware that I am skilled in the practice of medicine; this will be of use to me in gaining access to the houses where these men have

their lodgings, for I must know exactly how they are situated and who are members of the families with whom they board, and this will aid me in taking my measures. Brordus will, I trust, tomorrow afford me information in regard to some of these matters. Now I must ask to be left alone, for I wish to send word immediately to my superior, with whom I promised to communicate as soon as I had any certain knowledge of Moreau's whereabouts."

Melchior, who would gladly have gained further information or have penetrated the Jesuit's designs, bit his lips with vexation, but, comprehending that all attempts to attain this end would be useless, he gave his hand to Digo, wished him success and returned to his back room.

As soon as his landlord had left the room Florentius Digo locked the door, saying to himself,

"Melchior is getting to be a little troublesome. He wants to know everything, and I tell him a great deal; but a wise Christian must not tell all he knows nor betray all his plans. His object is money and ours is *souls*, and certainly the latter is a far more exalted one, for it involves the glory of God."

While speaking Digo had opened a wardrobe, divested himself of his burgher-dress and put on priestly garments. Next he took from a dark corner a black wooden cross with the image of the

Redeemer upon it; this cross he placed upon the table. He then laid a small prayer-book before the crucifix, kneeled by the table and bowed his head over it till his lips nearly touched the surface. For full twenty minutes he remained in this position, repeating several prayers from the book and occasionally kissing the crucifix. Finally, he took a piece of cord and with it beat himself upon the back and shoulders so that the impressions remained visible upon his clothing, and at the end of this castigation he prayed half aloud:

“O holy Virgin Mary, come to my aid! I wish to regain and save a soul which has wandered away from the true faith. O Virgin most holy, assist me, that I may bring the wanderer back into the bosom of our Church—or, at least, save his soul from eternal misery.”

After remaining a few moments longer in this supplicating posture, Florentius rose from his knees, put everything back in its place and sat down by the table to engage in writing.

While the Jesuit is occupied with his letter to his superior we shall take the opportunity to follow the movements of our humbler friend, Brordus Groot.

In spite of the measures of the magistracy to secure the proper observance of Sunday, there always have been people who will sin against the institutions of both God and man. It was so at

Leyden. The breweries and the inns were forbidden to be open to the public on Sunday, but those who kept these houses always managed to have a back door for the accommodation of such as wished to slake their thirst for beer on that day, and habitual customers knew very well where that back door was to be found. Not far from the fish-market there was an alley where lived a brewer who also sold his own beverage and had designated his place "The Full Vat." Many lovers of malt liquors were in the habit of visiting this place, and among these was Brordus—that is, whenever he was in condition to pay for his enjoyment; for the host gave no credit.

On this Sunday afternoon Brordus hastened to the Full Vat as soon as his master had sent him upon his new errand. His desire for a pot of beer was greater than ever after the trick that old Melchior had played him, and he meant to take revenge upon his previous disappointment by a liberal indulgence now. He rattled the copper coins in his pockets as he entered, to announce to the innkeeper that if he could furnish beer there would be no danger of the money not being forthcoming. The barroom was not occupied by any one else, which gave Digo's clothes-brusher no uneasiness. He placed himself at one of the clean-scoured tables and drank to his heart's content. When he thought he was in proper condition to

undertake the mission upon which he had been despatched, he rose and left the inn. He went to the street facing the Maare gate where was located the house of the widow Van Dyck. Arrived at the house, where he was well known, he raised the knocker and gave two loud knocks. The door was quickly opened by a girl of about sixteen years, of a healthy and winning appearance, with a good-natured expression of countenance and a forehead that indicated intelligence. Altogether, she made a pleasant impression upon even the casual observer. When she saw the person who had knocked, a slight frown became visible upon her clear brow, and words which might not altogether have expressed a pleased surprise at a call from him almost sprang to her lips. He was evidently, also, a little the worse for his beer. Nevertheless, she did not prevent his entrance.

"Will you be kind enough to walk and speak very softly, Brordus?" she whispered to him. "For you know mother is very weak; she can hardly stand even my reading to her."

"Oh yes, miss," answered Brordus. "I know just how much your mother can stand, so I'll speak vewy soft. Is she sitting up?"

"Yes, she is," was the reply, the girl ascending a dark, narrow staircase, the visitor closely following. "Here is the door. Now, speak softly, remember!"

The two entered an apartment plainly furnished, but neat and comfortable. At the window, which looked out upon the meadows surrounding the city, sat a woman of about fifty years of age, pale and evidently a great sufferer. Opposite to her stood an empty chair, and on the table lay an open book from which the girl had been reading. The pale-faced woman seemed no less surprised at this visit than her daughter had been, but she took the hand which Brordus held out to her.

"We are old acquaintances, Dame van Dyck," began the latter, in a burst of friendly feeling which got the better of his promise to speak low. As he took a seat upon the chair next to the widow the girl made a sign, by laying her finger on her mouth, to remind him of her admonition to be less noisy.

The widow nodded assent to Brordus's friendly greeting, but did not speak.

"I have not been here in a long while," he continued, "and, since your husband and I used to work together and he was always kind to me, I thought I ought to pay you a visit, especially since I heard to-day that you were vewy ill. How are you now?"

"Mother is very poorly indeed," answered the girl, speaking for the invalid; "she suffers much from her lungs."

"'Suffers from her lungs'?" said Brordus, sym-

pathizingly. "That is very bad. But I believe that I can be of some use to her, then."

"You?" asked the girl, astonished.

"Yes, I—Willebwoddus Gwoothuwwelbwink," asserted Brordus, with dignity. "You know I am not working at the weaver's trade now, but do odd jobs of all kinds. I am fwequently at the house of Melchiow van Walle, who, you know, used to keep a druggist-shop."

"'Melchior van Walle'?" said the widow, feebly. "I do not like that man. We must not judge, says the Bible, but still we may know men by their fruits. Is he really a Protestant? I have heard evil reports about him."

"I know nothing as to his being a Protestant," answered Brordus, his tones getting louder, "but I do know that he is a miser who will never let me earn a cent. However, I have not learned the druggist business from him and do not know anything about medicines myself, but over a week ago a smart gentleman came and rented rooms of him. He is very skillful in using medicines, and he has told me that he is especially at home in treating lung troubles."

In spite of her former repugnance to the visitor and of her first inclination to doubt his words, the girl was carried away by the hope that here might really be an opportunity for the relief of her mother's suffering. She quickly asked, therefore,

“Would that doctor be willing to help mother?”

“Cewtainly, cewtainly!” Brordus assured her. “I have only to ask him and he will be here wight away, fow he is very pwompt.”

“But his medicines are perhaps very dear,” said the sick woman. “I am but a poor widow who since it pleased the Lord to take her dear husband must live very economically.”

“Oh, do not be afwaid,” said Brordus, encouragingly; “that foweign doctow takes no money fwom poow widows. He is, I believe, vewy wealthy, and, while he visits the sick by day, he pwepawes medicines at night.”

“But even if it did cost you something, mother dear,” said her daughter, eagerly, “health is a great treasure, and the Lord lets the herbs grow to cure the sick. I will gladly sell my lace collar if we have to pay for medicines.”

“I know you mean well, Johanna,” said the widow, “but I will not let you do that.”

“But, mother,” rejoined the girl, “if you should have to pay for the medicines, I think it very likely that the young gentleman who boards with us would be glad to assist you.”

“Oh!” remarked Brordus, with the most innocent face in the world; “have you a boarder?”

“Yes; some one from Flanders—from Courtray,” was the reply. “He is employed in the bookstore of Mr. Paedts.”

"From Courtray?" inquired Brordus, with growing wonder depicted on his countenance.

"Yes—that is, from a village near Courtray," replied Johanna. "He had to flee for his life on account of his religion; his mother barely saved him."

"Oh, you don't say?" observed Brordus, striking his hands upon his knees to express his astonishment. "Well, now, that is very wemarkable!"

"What is?" asked mother and daughter at the same time.

"Why, because I have heard my doctow tell about a mother who cwies for her son day and night, and whose son is supposed to have wun away to these parts somewhere. I believe that she is almost dying and has witten a letter to her son. Wait a moment; my doctow mentioned also the name of that mother. Madame Mow—"

"Moreau?" exclaimed Johanna.

"Yes, that is it; Moweau. Madame Moweau has also a daughter, who is very wicked."

"Oh, it is the same—the very same lady who is the mother of Mr. Antoine," cried Johanna, in the fullness of her heart. "How rejoiced he will be to hear from his mother!"

"Say, rather, grieved, my child," coughed the sick woman, holding her hand to her breast as if in pain; "for did you not hear Brordus say that she is dying?"

“I have still more to tell you,” said Brordus. “My worthy doctow has the letter of Madame Mowean in his possession, and has been looking all over the city for her son. How strange that I should have come here just at this time! I had thought first of going to church, but ‘No,’ I said to myself; ‘I had better go and see Dame van Dyck.’ How coincidental! How glad my good doctow will be when he hears of it! I’ll go back to him right away to tell him about it, and also to ask about your lung troubles.”

“You had better wait,” said the widow; “perhaps our lodger will be back soon. He is not very well, either, and suffers much from headaches. We expect him every moment; he went to Voorschoten with a friend to conduct some evangelistic services.”

“‘To Voorschoten’!” exclaimed Brordus. “I wish I had known this, for I surely would have gone myself; but it doubtless was not intended that I should enjoy that blessing. But now I must go. Good-bye, good Dame van Dyck. I will see you again soon.”

At this moment the knocker was struck upon the door. Johanna rose quickly, but Brordus was ahead of her, and, descending the narrow stairs, he soon reached the front door, opened it and hurried past two persons who stood upon the stoop, and who were none other than Antoine Moreau and Walter Harmsen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT.

IT was ten o'clock in the evening of the same day. The widow Van Dyck and her daughter had retired to rest some time ago and fallen asleep in the happy expectation of a visit on the morrow from the foreign doctor who would put an end to the mother's sufferings.

But there was one in the dwelling who could not sleep. Antoine Moreau was seated at a little table near his bed; he leaned with both elbows upon the table, pressed his open palms against his temples and seemed plunged in deep thought.

"My poor mother sick unto death!" he sighed, wiping the tears from his cheeks. "How this news pierced my heart! My dear mother! and suffering on my account! Had I wings, I would fly to her embrace. And why should I not go? Who will prevent me? Not Mr. Paedts, surely; he would at once excuse me if he knew the circumstances. The widow Van Dyck does not dissuade me, for she suggested to me that could I be with mother perhaps I might be the means of bringing her from

the brink of death back to life, not only physically, but spiritually. But Mr. Walter Harmsen gives no credence to this rumor. It may be true, he told me in parting, that my mother is very sick—even sick unto death—but that the persons through whom the tidings have come awaken suspicion. He fears that the Jesuits are behind this, and that my enemies are lying in wait to deliver me over to the power of Father Benedictus and the Inquisition. But perhaps Mr. Harmsen judges too harshly. True, Melchior van Walle may not have a savory reputation, but on that account must I conclude that the Courtray doctor is of the same stamp? It may be, as it is said, purely coincidental. And even if there were some ground for my sharing the suspicions of Mr. Harmsen, the matter could soon be determined by means of that letter which the doctor is said to have in his possession.”

Antoine ceased speaking, and listened to discover if any one were astir in the house. All was still. The town-clock struck half-past ten.

“No,” he continued; “I cannot go to bed. I could not sleep, for my head beats like a trip-hammer. It aches terribly. I trust I will not get sick and die before I can go to mother. I cannot rest till I know more about her. Perhaps I could see the doctor this very night. But is it not too late? But no; Johanna said that the doctor prepares his medicines at night. He may not, there-

fore, have retired as yet. Yes, I had better go and see him. Oh, mother, gladly would I give my life to save yours."

The youth rose from his chair in order to carry out his purpose, and had the knob of the door in his hand, when he bethought himself and returned to his chair. He knelt down by it and poured forth his heart to God in fervent prayer for his mother and himself. After this he wrapped himself in his mantle, with noiseless steps left his room and the house and walked out into the darkness.

At this very hour Melchior van Walle and Florentius Digo were busily engaged in boiling herbs in the little court of their dwelling; a small lantern suspended from a stick projecting from Melchior's back room lighted them in their work. The whilom apothecary was stirring the seething mass in an earthen pot standing upon a portable furnace, while he held a sand-glass in the other hand. The Jesuit occasionally let fall a drop or two of a watery substance into a mixture which stood boiling by the side of the other.

"I believe that the medicine for the widow's lung trouble is nearly ready," said Melchior, once more consulting his sand-glass. "Was it not two hours that the ingredients were to be boiled?"

"Yes," whispered Digo, "but are those two hours gone already?"

“Consult the hour-glass. I put the drugs into the pan when the clock struck half-past eight, and for the second time the glass indicates that nearly an hour has passed.”

“Very good,” said the Jesuit. “Be so kind, then, as to pour the contents through a sieve into a flask, and let it cool till morning, when the widow will need to take it. Methinks, if you are through with that, you might as well retire; for my preparation is not yet done, and it may take half the night.”

“What preparation is it?” inquired Melchior, who had frequently cast glances at the mixture that Digo was concocting, but had not been able to make out what it was.

“I am preparing a cordial for my own use,” answered the Jesuit without a moment’s hesitation, although the statement was an utter falsehood.

Melchior delayed as much as he could by slowly pouring the medicine he had prepared out of the pan and through the sieve, and by making apparently fruitless search for a proper flask in which to preserve it. But finally he was through with his work, and then, having in vain repeated his question, he was compelled to retire to his back room.

Florentius Digo remained alone in the courtyard. He busied himself incessantly with his mixture, and occasionally brought it close to the lantern to ascertain its progress.

“It takes a long time,” he muttered, “for that liquid to assume the required color ; it continues too bluish, and would thus be visible if put into water. But look !” he continued, pouring something from a little vial. “It is getting paler already. Now ! now it is of the right tint.”

A hellish exultation overspread the countenance of Digo, and he eagerly stretched out his hands to take the copper basin from the furnace ; but in his excitement he forgot that it was red hot, and he burned his fingers badly. A curse escaped him, but, recollecting himself, he drew a crucifix from his pocket, kissed it several times and mumbled a prayer. Having learned caution from his previous experience, he removed the crucible with the proper instruments, placed it upon the ground and poured the fluid, which in quantity did not exceed three tablespoonfuls, into a vial. He had just finished these operations when he raised his head and listened intently. The steps of one approaching the house could be plainly heard. He held his breath and said to himself,

“Can it be he ? I had almost abandoned the hope that he would come.”

The sound of a knocker was heard striking the front door ; it was faint and brief, as if the person who wished to announce himself had scarcely ventured to lift the knocker. The pale cheeks of the Jesuit became flushed with anticipation and eager

joy. He hastily blew out the lantern, entered the house, and, hurrying through the hall to the door in front, he asked through the keyhole,

“Who is that?”

“A young man who wishes to consult the doctor from Courtray,” was the reply.

“But do you know how late it is? You have disturbed me in my sleep. Can you not return on the morrow?”

The Jesuit was certain that the answer would be a negative one; he wished to augment the youth's desire by seeming discouragement, and thus make more sure of his prey.

“I could indeed come again to-morrow, but pardon me, doctor, if I beseech you to receive me now.”

Florentius pretended to be grumbling while he drew the bolts, opened the door and let Antoine Moreau into the house. It was pitch-dark in the hall, and thus the Jesuit was compelled to take Antoine's hand and conduct him to his room. He with difficulty restrained an involuntary shudder that threatened to shake his frame as he touched his victim's hand. The youth followed his conductor with implicit confidence and without a suspicion that he was being led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Arrived in his rooms Digo lighted a small lamp suspended from the ceiling and took care to place a chair for Antoine in such a position that the full

light would fall upon his features, while he himself would be in the shade.

"You wish to consult me?" began the Jesuit. "I must say the hour is a somewhat unusual one."

"Pardon me, learned sir," replied Antoine, from time to time lifting his cold hand to his forehead, as if to reduce the burning heat—"pardon me, but I could get no rest."

"What, then, has brought you to my house?" inquired the Jesuit.

"My mother."

"Your mother? In what way am I connected with her? Am I acquainted with her?"

"I have been informed that you are."

"Who has informed you?"

"The widow Van Dyck, at whose house I lodge; she had a visit from a former weaver—a fellow-workman of her husband, Brordus Groot, or something like that, by name. Is he known to you?"

"'Brordus' did you say?" inquired the Jesuit, apparently making an effort to recollect the name. "Oh yes! Let me see. Yes, I have heard his name."

"This man told the widow Van Dyck that you know my mother."

"Your mother? I know so many mothers, for as doctor I visit several families. What is her name?"

“Jeanne Moreau, of Monne, near Courtray,” replied the youth, becoming encouraged.

“I know her very well. She is a very amiable lady.”

“My mother? Yes indeed, she *is* an amiable lady,” said Antoine, fervently. “I love her more than I love my life.”

“But did you not run away from her? How must I reconcile that with your words just now? I have always understood that one prefers to remain near those whom one loves dearly.”

The youth did not at once reply. He hid his face in both hands, but could not prevent the light from showing the tears between his fingers.

“Yes, I indeed left her,” he sighed, “but I did not flee from *her*; I was compelled to leave Monne and Courtray, and to come hither.”

“Who compelled you to do so?” asked the Jesuit, quietly.

Antoine Moreau looked at Digo as if he would read upon his countenance from what source proceeded this question, but, seeing nothing on those emaciated features but an expression of kindly interest—which the Jesuit could assume to perfection—he said,

“Are we alone here?”

“Why that question?”

“Because there are certain wicked persons who would gladly ensnare a human soul.”

The Jesuit rightly gathered from this answer that Antoine cherished no suspicion whatever as to his real character, and to confirm his confidence still further he deemed it expedient to throw in a pious reflection :

“ You are right. But you may depend upon it that we are here alone, and that in this room none but God sees us or hears us. Say, then, what you wish to tell me, but pray be brief, for it is near midnight.”

“ You are, of course, not unacquainted with the fact that a division has taken place in the Church,” began Antoine.

“ You mean by the Reformation,” said Florentius. “ Do you regret it ?”

“ Not at all,” replied Antoine, quickly, at the same time gathering from the tone with which the doctor put the question that the latter was inclined to favor the Reformation. “ No, not at all ! The Reformation was a blessed event, and it grieves me sorely that it still meets with so many opponents. I too was formerly foolish—or let me, rather, say blind—enough to believe that a priest could forgive my sins, or that anything was required to be assured of salvation except a sincere and heartfelt faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ I am rejoiced to hear you speak thus,” observed Digo, who by this ambiguous declaration sought to entrap the youth still further, increasing his con-

fidence and forging weapons against him out of his own mouth.

"I thank the Lord that he gave me the grace to close my heart against the errors of Rome and to open it to the full light of the gospel. I could not keep silent when the joy of these new convictions thrilled my heart. It became known that I had become a heretic, and now the enemy sought to take and destroy me."

"Was I wrongly informed," inquired the Jesuit, "that you had a friend who visited you and made you acquainted with the doctrines of the Reformation?"

"No, doctor; you were correctly informed. To my last breath will I bless the Lord for sending this friend to me when he did."

"I can easily comprehend your feelings," said Digo. "And I understand it was in the hope of encountering that friend, who lives in this city, that you directed your way hither? Even during my short stay I have heard him highly spoken of in this neighborhood. His name, if I mistake not, is Walter Harmsen?"

"It is the same, doctor, and this very afternoon I accompanied him to Voorschoten and back."

"Indeed?" said the Jesuit, and continued in an insinuating manner: "It will afford me extreme gratification to make his acquaintance. He is to me a person of great interest."

"I shall be glad to afford you the opportunity of meeting him," said Antoine, delighted.

"But it will have to occur very promptly," smilingly observed Florentius, "unless it be postponed to a subsequent visit. My patients at Courtray cannot do without me very much longer; hence I must leave for home to-morrow night."

Antoine started. Although he had come here fully prepared to give due weight to Walter Harmsen's suspicions and determined to be on the watch, the conversation and the expression of the doctor's sentiments to which it had led—evidently favorable to the Reformation and warmly appreciative of Mr. Harmsen's character—had confirmed him in the conviction that the man was what he had represented himself to be, and that he could not be a spy of the Jesuits and the Inquisition. And now it seemed that he must lose his society so soon. This filled Antoine with dismay.

But Digo was aware that it was unwise to let the young man's thoughts run a long time upon one point; hence he continued:

"Do not allow this to distress you. If it please Heaven, we shall soon meet again, then not to separate for a long season. I now fully understand your situation. I perceive that the enemies of the Reformation have compelled you to take flight, as otherwise they would have delivered you into the power of the Inquisition."

"That is my case exactly, learned sir," assented Antoine.

"Well, I must confess that this was not an ill-advised course on your part, for it is by no means a light thing to fall into the hands of the Inquisition. But how did your mother feel about this?"

"My mother? Oh, doctor, if you could have witnessed the struggle going on in my mother's heart, especially in the moment when I was pursued and she aided me to escape!"

"I can easily imagine it. In the mean time, I am glad that I was not deceived in your identity, and you must pardon me for asking so many questions: I wished to be perfectly sure you were the right person. And now that I find you are, allow me to warn you. I know that many persons have been sent here under the auspices and by the orders of the Inquisition, with the command to put you to death; for even to such extremes the malice of the enemies of the Reformation will sometimes go. I should judge it safer for you, accordingly, to leave this city and fix your residence elsewhere."

"But whither shall I go?" inquired Antoine, whose head still throbbed and burned as in a fever.

The Jesuit pretended to be reflecting for a few moments:

"I would suggest the city of Lille, in France. You could remain unknown there, and, besides, the Inquisition is not in force there."

“But why leave a country like this, where the Reformed religion is fully established, and go to France? Even though the Inquisition is not tolerated there, yet neither have the Huguenots been able to gain the victory over the faith of Rome.”

“Well, I thought of it as a place that was much nearer your mother. On the way to Lille you could visit her and gladden her heart by the sight of you, however brief the interview. I know how much her life depends upon your presence. I saw her only fourteen days ago; she suffered much, but my medicines relieved her pain to a great extent. The main and incurable difficulty, however, and that which will be the death of her, is the separation from you. Your image is before her day and night, and she constantly assured me that she would gladly share a prison, and even death, with you rather than remain severed as now.”

By this artful picture of Antoine's suffering mother, whose life was represented as depending on his return, a powerful impression was wrought upon the confiding youth. The Jesuit saw him reel upon his chair and gasp for breath. He hastened to his support and gave him some potent cordial to restore him to himself.

CHAPTER XXV.

A MOTHER'S LETTER.

WHEN Antoine Moreau had recovered somewhat from the effects of his overwrought feelings, he said,

“It has also been told me that my mother gave you a letter to be handed to me.”

“This is indeed so. When I informed her that in the pursuit of my professional studies it would be necessary for me to visit the university in this city for a few days, she gave me this letter, which she wrote in my presence while the tears were streaming down her cheeks.”

At these words Florentius Digo drew from his pocket a paper folded square and into convenient dimensions for secreting about the person. The youth at once eagerly reached out his hand toward the precious missive, but the supposed doctor replaced it immediately in his pocket.

“I am sorry to cause you so cruel a disappointment,” he explained; “but you are only a youth and do not know to what dire extremes religious hatred can go. I have already told you that the Inquisition has despatched secret spies hither to lie

in wait for your life. If these men should discover that I am making common cause with you—that I have advised you to settle at Lille—I could not be sure of my own life for a moment after my return to my native town. But the worst offence I could commit, in the judgment of the Inquisition, would be to hand you a writing from any source. Besides, this would furnish documentary evidence against me.”

“And do you suppose, worthy doctor, that I would betray you? No tortures in the world would be able to force your name from me.”

“Nay ; I do not for an instant doubt your goodwill,” said the Jesuit, “but you do not know your own strength or how weak you might become under the severe ordeal of the rack and—”

“I assure you, doctor, nevertheless,” said Antoine, with firmness and decision beyond his years, “that no one upon this earth would ever learn that you had conveyed this letter to me. Oh, do not leave me any longer unacquainted with what my dear mother has written to me.”

Antoine had risen from his chair in the fervor of his speech, but he was compelled to keep himself from falling by holding on to the table, for a tremendous paroxysm of pain seemed to tear his brain. The full light of the lamp shone upon his noble features, and he gazed with intense earnestness into the eyes of the man opposite.

In the mind of Digo was actually going on a struggle which was manifest upon his countenance, but Antoine deceived himself as to its real nature. The Jesuit was in doubt whether this was the time to strike his blow or if it were best to wait twenty-four hours longer. He appreciated that the departure of the young man could not easily be effected without the knowledge of the publisher Paedts and Walter Harmsen, yet the obtaining of that knowledge must be prevented in some way. The less, therefore, the youth spoke of his intended movements, the better for the Jesuit's plans.

Antoine, who could not restrain his eager longing for the letter, laid his hand upon the shoulder of Florentius.

"Oh, doctor," he pleaded, "do not torment me any longer. Let me read my mother's letter, and I am prepared to follow you wherever you may deem fit."

"Do you know what you are saying, young man?" asked Digo, seriously. "Suppose I were an enemy?"

"Ah, no! such you are not. I feel it; I know it. Therefore, I pray you, give me my mother's letter."

The doctor still hesitated. At length he said,

"Very well; I will risk my life for your sake. But permit me at least to use a caution which is necessary. Swear to me that you will tell no one

in this city of Leyden that you have seen me or that I have allowed you to read your mother's letter; I must ask you to do this for the reasons just stated. And if you will swear this, why I might as well go deeper into offence and promise to conduct you safely to Monne, so that before settling elsewhere you may meet your mother. I possess a passport for two persons, given on the authority of the governor-general of the Spanish Netherlands. It was my intention to have invited some young physician just graduated here to accompany me and undertake a practice in Courtray, to relieve my own too arduous labors. I will allow you to take advantage of the passport instead."

The Jesuit perceived with some alarm that Antoine now hesitated in his turn; for a moment he feared that he might have overacted his part and awakened the youth's suspicions. He judged it best, therefore, to feign indifference to his answer, and, assuming a tone of vexation, said,

"What? Do you not accept my proposition? Why, then, do you come here at this untimely hour and rob me, a man in poor health, of the night's rest which I so greatly need?"

"I am not permitted to do what you require of me," said Antoine, with earnest deliberation.

"And why not?" inquired the Jesuit, more mystified than ever.

Without saying another word the youth drew

from his pocket a copy of the Bible, and after turning several pages he read the passage in James v. 12: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." After reading this he placed the open book before the Jesuit and pointed with his finger to the verse.

Never before, perhaps, had such a deadly pallor spread over the emaciated cheeks of the Jesuit as at this moment, when by the very part he played he was compelled to lay his eyes upon the hated Bible of the Reformers. Though a master in the art of deception, it was with the greatest difficulty that he refrained from betraying himself through losing control over his feelings. He closed his eyes, that he might not see the fateful letters; but he comforted himself with the reflection that this very book in Antoine's possession was a deadly evidence against him, and he adroitly turned his irrepressible horror to account by making it appear that his deep emotion had been occasioned by his conviction of the truth of the words.

"You see, therefore, learned sir," continued Antoine, "that I cannot comply with your request. The apostle Paul indeed commends the oath as the end of all strife, but this is the civil oath required by the magistrate, whom also we are enjoined to obey. But you would require of me a private

oath, as between you and me personally. I cannot consent to swear such an oath. We must obey God rather than men."

"It is now perfectly plain to me," replied Florentius, quietly; "I am sorry I did not think of these things without your reminder. No; you ought not to swear to me."

"I rejoice that you share my sentiments in the matter. You may be assured that I would rather die than break my word of promise; my yea and nay are to me as sacred as is an oath."

The Jesuit was too shrewd and too well acquainted with human nature not to be perfectly convinced that an oath would be superfluous here. He therefore said,

"Very well; I trust you. Lay your hand in mine and promise me solemnly, with a sincere yea, that while here in Leyden you will not mention to any one, whoever it may be, that you have seen me or received a letter from me. Only on this condition can I consent to deliver to you the letter, and after reading it we will together consult how we shall arrange it first to visit your mother and next to secure you a residence elsewhere where you will be unmolested. Have you comprehended my meaning?"

"Yes; I understand you," answered Antoine, grasping the Jesuit's hand and trembling with emotion. "I promise you that so long as I am in

Leyden I shall not mention having seen you or receiving a letter from you."

The Jesuit drew the wick of the lamp a little higher, then took the letter from his pocket and handed it to Antoine. The youth sank into a chair, held the precious paper in both hands, unfolded it, and when he saw his mother's familiar handwriting kissed the page and cried,

"Oh, my dear, dear mother!"

The Jesuit withdrew into the next room, and left Antoine Moreau alone during his perusal of the letter.

When Florentius Digo re-entered the room, he was astonished to notice how pale Antoine had become. Indeed, the intense excitement which had suffused forehead and cheeks with a red, feverish hue was completely gone, and was replaced by a calmness which was more appalling than the other had been. The Jesuit was slightly alarmed when he beheld that pallid countenance, and for a moment he feared that the excessive strain upon Antoine's nerves, followed by a too powerful stirring of his emotions by the reading of the letter, might have so shocked the youth as to affect his reason. Another fear took possession of Digo as the idea struck him that sickness or sudden death might deprive him of his victim in the very hour when success seemed to have crowned all his efforts. He accordingly felt he must hasten to his relief by

medical treatment, and, silently invoking the aid of the Holy Virgin, he took a vial from a closet, poured a few drops into a goblet of water and handed it to Antoine, who drank it mechanically. The Jesuit breathed more freely when this had been done, for he knew that the medicine would afford relaxation to the strained nerves.

"Worthy doctor," said Antoine, in tones so cool and decisive that Digo looked at him in wonder, "did you not say that you meant to take your departure the very next night?"

"I must without fail leave here to-morrow night," was the reply.

"A while ago you made me promise you something, which I cheerfully did; now I have to ask you to make me a promise with all seriousness."

"Until I know what it is you require I cannot say that I can make it," said the Jesuit, although he pretty shrewdly conjectured what Antoine was about to ask.

"I shall ask of you nothing that you cannot grant," said the youth, rising and standing immediately in front of Florentius.

"Let me hear what you wish of me."

"Promise me that you will not leave without me, and that you will safely conduct me to my mother that I may see her once more before she dies; then I shall cheerfully surrender my life into the Lord's hands."

"Yes, that I sw— I promise you," said Florentius, correcting himself.

"Very well ; I thank you ;" and, taking the Jesuit's lean, bony hands, the youth pressed them to his lips. "Now tell me what I must do," he continued.

"Are you, then, willing to abandon yourself wholly to my guidance, whatsoever may be the consequences?"

"Wholly, providing you bring me safely to my mother."

"That I promise you, and I will add the assurance that you will be conducted in security elsewhere."

"Tell me, then, what I must do."

"To-morrow night, at two o'clock, a boat will be in readiness to take us to Rotterdam and Bergen-op-Zoom ; from that place we shall find opportunity to reach Ghent *viâ* Antwerp, and thence to Courtray."

"How?"

"This I will tell you to-morrow night at two o'clock. When the town-clock strikes two hours after midnight, betake yourself to the Maare gate. Pass through this and step twenty paces to the left ; there you will find me. Do you understand?"

"Yes ; very well indeed. I shall be there," answered Antoine.

The events of the last few hours had made another person of Antoine Moreau. One who had observed the modest youth but a day before, seeing

him in this place and at this hour, would not have thought it was the same person. His resolve stood fixed. Fear, anxiety, doubt, had disappeared, and had left room for a strength of will which could not be turned aside from its determination. What had wrought this great change in him? If we could have looked into the letter which he still held in his hand, the problem would have been solved. It read as follows :

“MY DEARLY-BELOVED SON : “May the holy angels protect you and cover you with their wings to shield you from all bodily harm ! How I long for you since your flight ! All my life’s joy has departed, and my body is consumed with grief. The only happiness I enjoy is when Marie, your sister, places my chair by the window whence I saw you last as you escaped from the garden. Then I stretch out my hands after you to embrace you, and call out to you, ‘My son, my only son, come ! Return to your mother !’ I grow daily weaker, and the hour is perhaps not far off when I shall descend into the grave. And shall I not see you again ? No ; that cannot be. I must embrace you once more before I die. Your lips shall press mine as I breathe my last. Farewell, my son. With tenderest love,

“Your mother,

“JEANNE MOREAU.”

Antoine read this letter once more, put it into his pocket and inquired,

“Will everything remain as agreed upon? Must I provide for anything more?”

Florentius did not at once answer; that quiet determination still alarmed him. He regarded the youth with concern, for it surprised him that his medicine had not as yet produced its effect. Finally he said,

“All remains as agreed upon. I am not, however, altogether without anxiety about your health, although I trust that what I gave you a while ago will have a beneficial result during this night and to-morrow. But I fear for to-morrow night, and—” He hesitated a moment and fixed his gray eyes steadily upon Antoine’s, as if he would discover what effect his subsequent words would have upon him, and then continued: “And I apprehend that the shock to your system produced by the reading of the letter will be too much for you. Tell me, have you a friend who might be induced to watch to-morrow night by your bedside?”

“Yes, a tried friend who is faithful unto death.”

“What is his name?”

“Walter Harmsen.”

“What did you name him?” asked the Jesuit, pretending not to have understood.

“Walter Harmsen.”

“What! That excellent gentleman of whom

we spoke? Is he so devoted to you as to be willing to sit up with you? Well, if he will consent to do so, be sure and let him watch with you."

"Oh, I need not doubt that. He shall certainly be with me."

"So much the better," observed Florentius, who was equally sure of it. "But I am afraid he will fall asleep while he watches with you."

"And do you think I will sleep?" asked Antoine Moreau.

"By all means; your body needs it after the nervous exhaustion and emotional excitement it has experienced. Besides, it would be an excellent preparation for the journey if you could sleep part of the night."

"Very well," remarked Antoine.

"Will you tell him that at two o'clock you depart in my company?"

"No," promptly replied Antoine.

"But this friend must not sleep, else you might oversleep your time. To secure his wakefulness, here is a vial; pour twelve drops of the liquid in a goblet of water and see that your friend drinks the same."

With these words Digo gave Antoine the vial whose contents he had concocted in the court a few hours ago. Antoine took it and put it into his pocket.

"Now I must leave you; it is long after mid-

night. I ought not keep you longer from your needed rest," said he.

The youth and the supposed physician now separated. The Jesuit took the lamp and lighted Antoine to the front door; wrapping himself in his cloak, the latter left the house.

In the same moment some one crept along the courtyard, where he had stood beneath a window and listened to the conversation between Antoine and the Jesuit.

"The doctow must be a learned man; he can make all people sleep or keep them awake, as he pleases. I nevew heard anything like it."

On returning to his room Florentius had locked the door and set the black crucifix upon the table, and, leaning with his head against the edge of the table, he spent the greater part of the night in supplication and prayer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MIDNIGHT APPOINTMENT.

THROUGH small panes set in lead the setting sun threw his parting beams into the sitting-room of the widow Van Dyck's house. The invalid was seated in an arm-chair and her daughter stood by her side, for with each day the mother's need of Johanna's aid became more pressing. An almost incessant coughing had troubled the sick woman through the afternoon, and now she lay back in her chair exhausted, while Johanna supported her mother's head upon her arm.

"I think I will give you some more of that medicine, mother," said Johanna; "I hope it will do you good, but Brordus told us that the doctor said it would not produce relief before night. Shall I give you another cupful?"

The patient nodded assent, and Johanna left her side to procure what she wanted. She was busy filling a cup, when a knock was heard upon the front door, and she soon returned to the room followed by Walter Harmsen, whose otherwise habitually cheerful face expressed great despondency.

and anxiety. After the first greetings he asked somewhat hastily,

“Is not my friend Antoine Moreau in the house?”

“No,” replied Johanna, holding the cup of medicine to her mother’s lips—“no; and we have been wondering why we have seen nothing of him all day. He has probably been kept busy by Mr. Paedts.”

“I have just come from the book-store, but Mr. Paedts tells me that he saw him only a moment in the morning—that Antoine informed him that he would have to be absent all of to-day, and perhaps longer. I am at a loss to comprehend this strange conduct. Antoine told me nothing of any such purpose yesterday, either during our walk or on our return. When did you last see him?”

“This morning, as he was leaving the house. He was just as friendly as ever, but I was startled to notice his unusually pale features. I asked him if anything ailed him, but, strange to say, instead of answering, he turned his head and went off, yet not before I had seen the tears trickling down his cheeks.”

“It is very strange,” said Walter Harmsen. “And have you not seen him since that?”

“No, sir.”

A renewed attack of coughing for a few minutes made further conversation impossible. Johanna at

once gave her attention to the sufferer, rubbing her chest with warm flannels. Having afforded some relief by this means, Walter, who had momentarily forgotten his friend while contemplating the widow's painful distress, took his place by her chair and, faithful to his calling, spoke a word of cheer to her :

"How happy is the soul that has found peace in Jesus!" The widow nodded an eager assent, and Walter continued : "Though the body may be ill—yea, though death be near—these things can throw no obstacles in the way of God's grace, nor separate the soul from its Saviour. Nay, they but produce a sense of more precious and closer union with him."

As Walter Harmsen was speaking Antoine entered the room. It could plainly be read upon his countenance that he was surprised to find Walter here, but, understanding at once from the last words and the attitude of the patient and her daughter that the evangelist was administering the consolations of God's word to the sick, he quietly took his place next to his friend, bowed his head upon his hand, and thus gave evidence that he too was suffering and would share in the comforts of God's Spirit. Walter looked at him without ceasing to address the invalid, and was struck, as Johanna had been, by his extraordinary and alarming pallor.

“The apostle says, ‘There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.’ This,” continued Walter Harmsen, “is one of those glorious comforting promises which God vouchsafed to Paul, but which we too may appropriate if we love the person and the work of Jesus. Oh that all men might be so happy as to lean upon these immovable promises and to rejoice in them ! Then there would be fewer tears shed on the earth, and fewer sighs heard. Persecutions would cease, and an end would come to the words of prophecy, that the father shall be divided against his son, and the son against his father ; the mother against—”

Walter could not proceed, as Antoine, at his side, began to sob aloud.

“What ails you, my dear friend ?” asked Walter, who of course knew nothing of what had occurred since he parted from Antoine on the previous evening.

“Alas ! my poor mother !” sobbed Antoine. “I am so far from her, and she is on her death-bed without knowing aught of these promises or having any part in them. Oh that I might be with her ! Could I but bring her here into this room that she might observe the peace of a soul that rests only and wholly upon Jesus and his promises !

Oh, my poor dear mother!" He covered his face with his hands and wept convulsively.

Walter Harmsen saw that the words he had spoken to the widow Van Dyck had given occasion to Antoine to make a comparison between the former and his own mother. He spoke to him soothingly, and sought to comfort him by pointing him to the power and the love of Jesus, who has a thousand means at command to save a soul from eternal death.

Suddenly, Antoine rose from his chair. Walter's words had awakened a new train of thought within him and added force to his determination to execute his plan. "If Jesus," was his reflection, "has a thousand means at command to save a soul from eternal death, then may he—and will he not?—cause my mother to be converted. And may it not be that *I* am to be the instrument in the Lord's hand? Oh, if I could be with her! No; I cannot possibly remain away from her."

Walter regarded Antoine with painful apprehension. The last rays of the sun fell upon the deathly pallor of his cheeks. Harmsen could not penetrate the young man's thoughts, but it needed only a look at him to learn that something extraordinary was going on within him. Laying his hand upon Antoine's shoulder, he said in a tone of voice expressing tenderest solicitude,

"Something ails you, dear Antoine. Are you in

need of my help? I see that you are suffering. Tell me, what lies upon your heart?"

The youth, whose reflections had transported him to Monne and his mother's bedside, was startled by Walter's actions and words. The question filled him with redoubled anguish, for Walter was very dear to him. On the one side stood the doctor from Courtray, who had made him promise to communicate to no one the conversation they had held and the plan which they meant to pursue; on the other hand there stood a friend who was taking so deep an interest in his welfare, to whom he could not speak of that plan, and who would very likely counsel him against it if he knew of it. Above all rose the thought of his suffering mother, perhaps upon her death-bed. He felt that strength failed him to separate from that friend before him without receiving a parting blessing, yet such words of farewell could not be spoken between them. What was to be done or said? A sigh escaped him, and with the sigh a prayer rose to heaven that the Lord would keep him from the sin of deceit. But he must reply; without looking Walter in the face he said,

"I feel ill and exceedingly weak, and I think it would do me good to retire at once and obtain some refreshing sleep. The reminiscences which came with renewed force to my mind as I related them to you yesterday afternoon affected me too strongly.

And," he continued, mournfully shaking his head, "when I think of the sweet and happy Christian confidence of our suffering friend Dame van Dyck, I am reminded painfully of her who, alas! is still held by the power of darkness. Ah! you cannot imagine what I am suffering. My head burns like fire. I cannot bear it much longer."

The widow, feeble as she was, made an effort to assure Antoine of her sympathy and prayers. Johanna proposed making ready some refreshing cordial for him, but Antoine thanked them for their kindness, said that he knew of nothing that could help his fever, asked but for a glass of water, and proceeded with the latter to the room that he occupied.

Walter ascribed his friend's condition to the excessive strain upon his nervous system occasioned by the recent conversations. He followed Antoine to his room and placed himself by the side of the bed, whereupon the sufferer had cast himself without removing his clothes.

Fully an hour passed, during which Walter dared not speak a word for fear of disturbing Antoine in his sleep, but, at the end of that time casting a glance toward the place where his friend lay motionless, he observed that he was not sleeping. Just then the town-clock struck ten. Antoine raised himself upon the bed as if frightened, and asked what time it was.

“Ten o’clock, Antoine,” said Walter. “I thought you were asleep.”

“No ; I cannot possibly sleep, neither do I wish to.”

Walter looked at him in astonishment.

“Do you not wish to sleep?” inquired he. “Why not? A while ago you thought sleep would do you good.”

“No ; I do not want to sleep, for fear I might sleep over the time. I have a pressing appointment to meet a person at two o’clock this night.”

Walter’s astonishment was greatly increased by this announcement, while the fear began to possess him that Antoine’s mind was wandering.

“You to meet some one at two o’clock? And this same night? Of what are you thinking? You are in no condition to keep such appointment. Lie down quietly and enjoy some sleep—believe me, that will be best for you—and to-morrow we will see how you are getting along.”

“No, dear friend,” said Antoine, gently but firmly ; “I do not wish to sleep unless you promise to watch with me and wake me at half-past one.”

Walter comprehended nothing of this ; the only possible explanation seemed to be that Antoine’s mind had become disordered. He asked himself if this could be the same gentle, modest, even bashful, youth with whom on the previous day he had conversed with so much pleasure and satisfaction.

How changed he had become within a few hours ! He was concealing something. What could have happened to him ? What was going on within his heart which he so obstinately refused to reveal ?

"But, my dear Antoine," said Walter, "of what are you thinking ? Who ever goes and meets a person at such an hour as that ? You know very well that the wicked go forth in the hours of night. Come, be quiet and have a drink of water. Shall we pray together ?"

"Most gladly, Mr. Walter," replied Antoine, sitting up in the bed ; "but I repeat : at two o'clock I have an appointment with a person. Should I fail to meet him then, I could never have a quiet hour again during all my life."

"And whom are you to meet ?"

"I am not just now at liberty to tell you, but be assured it is absolutely necessary. Promise to watch by my bed until the clock strikes the hour of half-past one. Look," he continued, pouring into a glass of water a few drops from the vial which Florentius had given him—"look : here is something that will secure wakefulness. Drink this, and then I can have some sleep."

Walter thought that all this was very strange, but supposed that it would be advisable to yield to the young man's wishes and thereby calm his too greatly excited nerves.

"I will do my best to keep awake," he said,

drinking the glass of water, "but how can I be sure of not falling asleep when you are sleeping? I have walked about a good deal to-day, and am very tired. Nevertheless, since you have set your heart upon it, I will do my utmost and try to read."

Set at rest by these words, Antoine asked Walter to pray, and after Walter had complied the youth lay down and fell asleep.

Walter thought to himself,

"It may be that he really does want to meet some one, but he will not be able to prevent my following him when he goes out ; and then I must ascertain what this means and who has made so suspicious an appointment with him."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DIAMOND CUTTING DIAMOND.

THE town-clock strikes half-past one.* Antoine Moreau starts from his bed into sudden wakefulness. All is dark. All manner of ideas flash through his brain. Has no one waked him be- times? Has he been left alone? Has the doctor from Courtray gone without him? Fearful apprehensions seize upon him. He feels about him in all directions, to assure himself that he is still in his room. He takes a step forward and stumbles against Walter Harmsen, who is seated in an arm-chair sleeping from the effects of the drug prepared by the Jesuit for that purpose. Antoine is about to shake him, but recollects himself.

“Why should I wake him?” he says to himself. “If it is past the time, he ought to have his rest. If it is not too late for my purpose, he might dissuade me or prevent my departure.”

* In some of the towns of Holland the clocks in church- steeples strike the half hours upon a different bell, feebler than that which strikes the hours. Two strokes of such feebler sound would indicate half-past one.—TRANSLATOR.

Antoine accordingly takes his hat and cloak from their accustomed place, lays the two volumes of the Paedts Bible upon the table near Walter's chair, and is ready to leave his room. At the door he checks himself a moment, as if held by an invisible hand. His glance turns to the window, and he sees the stars sparkle in the heavens.

"My God," he stammers, bowing his head reverently, "bless thou this house and all its inmates; bless him, that beloved friend who led me to thee. Oh, permit me to meet him again upon earth, that he may comfort me in trouble and cheer me in sorrow. Conduct me, Lord, in safety to my dear mother, and, whatsoever may happen to me, oh let her life be precious in thy sight."

The young man softly descends the stairs leading to the lower hall. He listens to see if he can hear any sounds in the widow's apartment, but everything is silent as the grave. He reaches the front door, which, to his surprise, he finds to be unlocked. He grants himself, however, no time to speculate on the reason for this, but, wrapping himself in his cloak and drawing the rim of his hat down over his eyes, he hurries along the street, and soon disappears in the darkness of the night.

Almost at the same instant there comes running from an opposite direction, along the same street, a young girl, accompanied by a man who leaves her when near the house. With difficulty—for she can

scarcely go a step farther for weariness—she ascends the stoop and pushes open the door. As speedily as she can she hurries to her mother's room, but, perceiving that she has fallen into a restful doze, she takes the lamp in her hand and hastens up stairs crying,

“Antoine Moreau! Antoine Moreau!”

The girl finds in the room no one but Walter Harmsen, who is sleeping heavily, and, uttering a cry on perceiving the empty glass upon the table, she seizes Harmsen by the arm and shakes him with all her might, exclaiming,

“Mr. Harmsen, where is Antoine?”

But neither the girl's words nor her efforts to awaken Walter meet with any response. She is dumfounded. A soft moaning is heard in her mother's room and she attempts to hurry to her aid, but it is impossible; her strength departs from her, and she falls swooning to the floor.

What brought Johanna to this condition? We will have to go back a few hours in time and see what occurred in other places while Antoine and Walter slept.

About the same time on that same evening that Walter Harmsen entered the sick-chamber of the widow Van Dyck, Florentius Digo was seated alone in his room busily engaged in rolling together some papers and placing them in a bag that lay upon the table.

“Now,” he said to himself, “I am ready. It was well that I succeeded in getting my trunk to the boat while Melchior was absent from home and Brordus was visiting the inn. It is by no means expedient that Melchior should know that I intend to leave the city so soon. The miser has an idea that I expect to remain yet several days, and hopes to get still more money out of me for his services. He has reckoned without his host, however. I am afraid, too, that Brordus will make known our scheme, for I believe that he overheard some of the conversation between Antoine and me; at least, I heard his step in the courtyard when I conducted Antoine to the door. I trust neither Melchior nor Brordus: the one is eager for money to fill his coffers; the other, to satisfy his thirst for beer. Both, therefore, can be bought over by money. In spite of the sum which I handed to Melchior when I first came—which was given without regard to rent, but simply to dispose him to aid me in securing Antoine Moreau—I have no guarantee whatever that he may make no attempt to obtain money from Mr. Paedts or Walter Harmsen, or some one else, by offering to betray me, and thus make both sides profitable to him. He is a rascal. Thus I will be on my guard and before nightfall try and leave the house quietly. But how to dismiss Brordus? If he should come and not find me, I may depend upon it that for the sake of money he

will reveal all to Melchior, and then all my trouble would be in vain and I must expect to be reprimanded by my superior. As a true son of the Church am I not obliged to use every effort to attain my ends? Must not I promote the glory of God and the Holy Virgin Mary by delivering apostates and heretics into the hands of the Inquisition? Why, then, hesitate to put Brordus in the way of spending the whole night in his inn drinking beer or whatever else he wants? I will give him double his usual wages, with the prospect of earning still more subsequently. But hark! I hear footsteps. It is perhaps Brordus himself."

The Jesuit was right: it was Brordus, who had just come from the little court, carrying a wide cloak on his left arm and a clothes-brush in his other hand. He placed the garment upon a chair and said familiarly,

"That was a pretty dusty job, Mr. Doctow. My thwoat is choked with lint and hairs, and so dwy as if in a yeaw not a dwop had gone down through it."

"Drinking would be a good remedy for that ailment, Brordus," said Florentius, encouragingly.

"'Dwinking'!" said Brordus. "Yes, but that costs." He made a motion with his hands as if he were counting money.

"Yes," assented the Jesuit, smiling, "that costs pence. Well, I think you have served me very

honestly and industriously, and so I can afford to let you have an evening to yourself. Here are some stivers ; these will give you a chance to drink to my health."

Brordus opened his eyes wide when he saw the many shining coins lying in his hand, and in imagination he was already transported to the Full Vat. He did not have sufficient penetration to suspect that it was exactly Digo's object to get him away to the Full Vat, and that he would not mind if he should get drowned in the vat itself. In his joy at the prospect of a night of unlimited beer-drinking he even forgot that Florentius was to depart this very night ; or if he thought of it, he tried to console himself with the idea that it would be for only a while. He thanked Digo and asked,

"Are there no more clothes to bwush ? Has the doctow nothing more for me to do to-night ?"

"No, nothing at all," assured the Jesuit ; "I am much pleased with what you have done. I shall leave town before long, but I believe there was something I wanted you to do before my return. Yes, now I think of it ; it is this : at least eight days in succession walk a short distance up the road to Voorschoten every morning. Remember well what you may see or hear. I shall pay you roundly for it when you meet me again."

Brordus promised to do this faithfully, bowed again and left the room.

Half an hour later, when the sun had set, Florentius Digo knocked at the door of Melchior's room. The latter was busy writing; but when he heard the knock, he hastily concealed a note which he had copied from another, left lying upon the table. The contents of each of these missives were as follows:

"Antoine Moreau is being enticed to go to Courtray; if bearer of this is given five and twenty florins, you will immediately be informed who is the person who has been making this attempt, and who is about to succeed in it."

"Come in!" called Melchior.

The Jesuit entered the apartment, which was lighted by one small lamp only, for Melchior was of the opinion that one person was not in need of quite so much light as were two or three. Florentius approached his landlord hat in hand and wished him "Good-evening," while Melchior offered him a chair.

"You doubtless surmise the reason of my visit," began the Jesuit, looking sharply at his accomplice, as if seeking to read the effect of his words upon the latter's countenance.

"No," replied Melchior, feigning ignorance; "but if my aid is required, I am ready for anything."

"Oh, I am aware of that," said Digo, coolly, "especially if—"

"If there is something to be made by it, you would say," interrupted Melchior, smiling; "but that need not surprise you."

"Not at all," observed the Jesuit, indifferently.

"I must have a chance to earn something once in a while," continued Melchior. "I am getting old, and the chances are getting rarer. And if I have not these, what must I live from? People imagine that I have much money, but they are sadly mistaken. I am sometimes in great straits, and was thus very glad lately when you came to rent rooms of me. I trust you do not leave very soon?"

"It cannot be long before I will have to leave you," replied Digo, who had no mind to tell his landlord how soon it would be. "You know that we have nearly attained our end: Antoine Moreau has resolved to go with me."

"And might there not be some one who could detain him?" asked Melchior, slyly.

"'Might there not be some one'?" replied Florentius. "Who can tell what *some one* might not do? But I have taken my measures, and with the help of the saints they will succeed."

"But suppose they should fail," suggested Melchior. "What then?"

"I should like to see the man," said the Jesuit, with emphasis, "who would cause the failure."

"I would not like to say that I had it in mind

myself to cause your failure," said Melchior, "but yet I can see that in the way there are obstacles which it would be best for you to remove."

The Jesuit understood perfectly what Melchior meant, but he was determined to let him make his extortionate propositions without prompting his cupidity by seeming to accede before he made them.

"To what obstacles do you refer?" he asked, innocently.

"Payment for my trouble."

"Payment to you? Did I not pay you in advance for the use of your rooms? And are you not bound by the rules of our order to assist me in the attempt to attain our ends, even to the sacrifice of money and of goods? What more can you require?"

"You are mistaken, worthy sir," said Melchior; "I am bound to nothing. Out of respect to your order I have been ready to assist you, but you Flemings forget the Dutch proverb: 'You can't make the chimney smoke with nothing.'"

"What, then, do you wish?" inquired the Jesuit.

"Fifty florins for my trouble, my night's rest and the use of my apothecary utensils."

Florentius remained as unmoved as if something quite ordinary were passing between them; not a feature changed.

"'Fifty florins'!" he observed. "And suppose I refuse to give you this amount?"

“Then will this note be handed to the persons interested.” With these words he pushed the paper that lay near him toward the Jesuit, who read it without sign of emotion.

“And to whom would you hand this?” he asked.

“I told you—to the persons interested.”

“But who would object to see a son return to his mother?”

“Such as suspect that behind this mother there lurks a prison. I am sure that Mr. Walter Harm-sen—”

“Oh, I have nothing to fear from him,” said the Jesuit; “he has neither power nor influence, belonging to no party in the land.”

“But he is by no means without influence: he is intimate with the sheriff, and is held in great esteem by the family of Marnix.”

“Those arch-heretics?” exclaimed Florentius.

“That they may be, but none the less capable of interfering with your plans. Besides, Mr. John Paedts—”

“And would you hand this note to either of the persons you have mentioned?”

“Yes, unless you purchased it from me.”

“For how much?”

“Fifty florins.”

“That is pretty dear paper,” said Florentius, jestingly. “I tell you I will give you the half of that for it.”

Melchior reflected a moment, and concluded that half a loaf was better than no bread.*

"Very well," he said; "then I promise not to hand this note to anybody."

"I will pay you the money this very night," said Florentius, rising and putting on his hat. "I trust you will have the kindness to accompany me once more upon a botanical excursion; I am in need of certain flowers which if picked at night have a special virtue. Will you go with me?"

"Certainly I will go. Perhaps, if the experiment succeeds, I will not go for naught."

"Miser!" was Digo's indignant thought, but he said audibly, "Will you be ready at midnight?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, then, till by and by," said the Jesuit, who withdrew, saying to himself, "To get that money he will have to be more cunning than he is."

After Florentius Digo had left the little back room, Melchior drew the other paper which contained the same words from the drawer, and muttered to himself,

"What a fine thing it is for a man to have a conscience! Now, my conscience forbids me to hand the other paper to the persons interested, but this note did not come into question. I will keep it safe; it may be of use."

* The Dutch proverb reads, "Half an egg is better than an empty shell."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE APOTHECARY OUTWITTED.

SHORTLY after midnight two men wrapped in cloaks passed through the Maare gate out into the open country, and after reaching a piece of woods busied themselves for about three-quarters of an hour in gathering, by the aid of a small lantern, several specimens of such common plants as taraxacum, tussilago, and others. No one could appear more absorbed in this occupation than Florentius Digo, who had collected several bundles. Melchior also was diligent. He was down upon both knees, and was ambitious to get as large a bunch as possible of these herbs. Suddenly the lantern was upset and extinguished and Melchior thrown headlong to the ground. He was prevented from crying out by Digo's forcing his face with all his might into the sand. Though wildly beating and kicking with arms and legs, he could not prevent Florentius from binding these limbs fast with a stout cord; and when he was secured in this manner, Digo pushed a gag into his mouth, turned him on his back and dragged him beneath a tree.

Melchior, thus rendered helpless, trembled with rage; and if the countenance of the whilom apothecary had been visible, it would have appeared of a livid red.

“My friend,” whispered Florentius, in the most insinuating of tones, “I am sorry that I was compelled to resort to a measure like this, and I trust that the Holy Virgin will forgive me, but you forced me to this alternative. Our order forbids taking any person’s life when he may be made otherwise incapable of interfering with our designs. *You* appeared to be disposed to prevent Antoine Moreau from accompanying me, and, since by command of my superior I was obliged to secure this result at all hazards, I have simply put you out of condition to accompany me back to the city. I may possibly need your services again at some future time, but I hope you will give me less trouble. To show you that I bear you no ill-will, I will wrap your cloak carefully about you, to protect you from the dampness of the night-air. Should you, however, to-morrow suffer from the evil effects of this exposure, you are aware that a concoction of licorice and sweet-wood is an excellent remedy for a cold. Lean quietly against the trunk of this tree and try to sleep. A few more hours and it will be daybreak, when some passer-by will ere long relieve you. Be assured, in the mean time, that I will remember you in my prayers. Farewell!”

Melchior made desperate attempts to give vent to his wrath, but could not produce a sound. Addressing him once more, Florentius wished him a good night's rest and disappeared among the trees.

The Jesuit's wish was destined not to be fulfilled so far as it referred to Melchior's rest during this night. The whilom apothecary spared no effort to rid himself of his bonds. It was not long before he discovered, as he rolled about on the ground, a large stone with a sharp edge; by rubbing the cords that bound his feet over this a few times he succeeded in severing them. Next, restored to freedom in his lower extremities, he was enabled to place his back over the stone in such a way as to make it perform the same office for the cord that held his arms behind him, but this process was much more toilsome than the former one, as he was compelled to move his whole body. The perspiration poured from his forehead in streams, and he was compelled to take frequent intervals of rest. At last, however, this effort also was successful, and he regained the use of his arms. He now sprang to his feet, removed the gag from his mouth and bethought him what was to be done. Lighting the lantern, he retraced his steps to the road and with all his might ran back to the city.

"Whither shall I first betake myself to circumvent this rascal?" he muttered as he ran. "To Mr. Harmsen? But I do not know just where he

lives. To the bookseller Paedts? But it is past midnight. Yet never mind that. Suppose I go straight to the sheriff? But then I lose my twenty-five florins. I care not, if I can show this rogue that Melchior knows how to revenge himself. But hark! What did I hear?"

While deliberating the apothecary had passed into the city through the Maare gate, and was therefore at no great distance from the house of the widow Van Dyck. He heard voices, and, running to the spot whence they proceeded, he found Brordus Groot lying on the pavement and Johanna standing by his side. The widow's daughter had gone to Melchior's house in the hope of inducing the foreign doctor to come over to the assistance of her mother, who had had another attack of coughing, but, no one answering her knocks, she was on her way back, when she encountered Brordus, who had become a "full vat" himself. The messenger of the Jesuit with difficulty kept his footing, and at last had fallen to the ground. Johanna almost fell over him, and did not at first recognize him.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I—I—I am Willebwoddus Gwoothuwelbwink," hiccuped the drunkard. "I have been dwinking the health of the doctow. A fine man!"

"But where is the doctor?" inquired Johanna. "I was at his house, and did not find him in."

“Yes, yes!” stammered Brordus, trying to get up on his feet. “Yes, yes! Where is the doctow? Flown, and the miser don’t get a penny. But I—I get a lot when the doctow comes back.”

“When is he coming back?” inquired Johanna, grieved to lose this chance of relief to her mother.

“When? I don’t know. Ask Mr. Moweau, who—”

“‘Moreau’!” exclaimed Johanna. “What does Mr. Moreau know about him?”

The drunkard screamed with laughter. Just at this point arrived Melchior, not a little surprised to find these two conversing here.

“What does he know about him? Why, he went along—along to Courtway.”

“‘To Courtray’?” exclaimed Johanna, in great consternation. “You are mistaken. Antoine Moreau is sick—very sick—and Mr. Walter Harmsen is watching by his bed.”

Brordus laughed aloud.

“Mr. Walter Harmsen watching? With whom? With a bird which has flown? Wrong, wrong! He has dwank a few dwops which will make him forget how to watch with people. Go home, and you will find the nest empty and a sleeping watcher.”

“The drunken fellow is right, miss,” said Melchior, who now understood why the Jesuit had surprised and bound him, and also remembered the medicine

upon which Florentius had bestowed such care the preceding night. "Antoine Moreau has doubtless gone with the doctor. I will conduct you back to your house and then institute some measures for apprehending this— Rascal!" he said between his teeth. "This doctor," he continued.

Johanna hurried home in great anxiety, accompanied by Melchior as far as her house, while they left Brordus to sleep out his drunken revel. We have seen what Johanna found on her return home.

It was a night of grief, disappointment, despair. Melchior went first to the house of Mr. Paedts, and with the latter to the sheriff. The three then betook themselves to the house of the widow Van Dyck, where they found Walter Harmsen still plunged in profound slumber. With some difficulty they succeeded in waking him, and it need not be said what were his emotions when he was informed of the circumstances. Upon the table lay the two volumes of the pocket-Bible which Antoine had left behind him. Walter involuntarily opened one of them, and then discovered upon the fly-leaf next to the cover the following words:

"I *must* see my mother again. Keep this Bible as a reminder of me. Farewell! Pray for me!"

Walter put both volumes in his pocket and immediately proceeded to the Maare gate, accompanied by Mr. Paedts and the sheriff, but they were too late. The bird had flown.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PRISON OF THE INQUISITION.

THE reader is invited to transport himself in imagination to the city of Tournay, situated in the province of Hainault, Belgium, at a distance of some fifty or sixty miles south-west of Brussels. The city is a very ancient one, and has sustained many remarkable sieges.

Not far from the old parochial church of Saint Bricé there stood at the time of our story a large building with a low tower attached. It had probably served in former times as one of the defences of the city, for it had much the appearance of a fort or redoubt. It was an ancient structure, its walls thick and lofty, surrounded by a moat and provided with embrasures. Standing on the opposite side of the wide moat and allowing the eyes to rest upon those high walls of gray stone, with their narrow apertures for windows or air-holes, the observer would feel an involuntary shiver pass through him, for his inevitable impression would be that this was a prison. And this was indeed the case. The building was known as the bishop's

prison or the prison of the Inquisition, for in earlier days many a victim of religious persecution had here been confined, to be released only by a death of torture; and the authorities of the Church still found occasion once in a while to put it to its former use, although offenders of other classes also were imprisoned here at the time of which we are writing.

Through a wide gate in one of the outer walls, to which access was had by means of a drawbridge, one entered into a court which was occupied by a guard of soldiers. Crossing this court, one arrived at a second gate, covered with iron plates, which opened upon a wide, vaulted and dark hall. To the right, on the ground-floor, were living-apartments occupied by the jailer and his assistant and the commander of the guard. To the left, about ten paces from the entrance of the hall, a stone archway led into a second hall, at the end of which was a door, also fortified with iron plates and heavily barred. This door gave access to a stone staircase about twenty steps high. At the top of these stairs was a dark vestibule somewhat in the shape of a horseshoe, upon which several doors opened. Above one of these was cut the inscription, "HALL OF JUSTICE OF THE HOLY INQUISITION." This hall was a large, circular apartment, being the second story of the round tower noticed above. But few articles of furniture were here to be seen

—a large oaken table, around which were ranged ten high-backed arm-chairs, and not far from this table a smaller one, upon which stood a rude stone crucifix. Back of this table there was a low doorway opening into another circular apartment without window or aperture of any kind which could admit the light of day; from the low ceiling hung a small brass lamp which could at best afford but a feeble radiance. Dark as it was in this room, the light from the larger hall, as one opened the door, was sufficient to reveal to the view objects well calculated to excite the horror of the visitor. Iron collars and chains were riveted into the wall; several thumb-screws, branding-irons and pincers lay in a square chest; while the rack, with its wooden rollers, stood in the centre. Out from this torture-chamber, where the victims of the Inquisition were wont to be examined and tried for their lives, one could pass by another door back into the dark vestibule above mentioned. In the left corner a second stone staircase, narrower and higher than the first, led up by thirty steps to a long hall. Two heavy iron doors on one side of this upper hall opened into the corridors which conducted to the cells where the victims of the Inquisition were imprisoned.

More than three months after the occurrences described in the preceding chapter two men might have been seen ascending the high stone staircase

leading from the dark vestibule to the cells above. One of the two was very corpulent in person, and his face indicated extraordinary dullness of mind. In his hand he held an iron ring with several large keys, and he groaned frequently beneath the weight of his own body, as well as of that which he was carrying. The other man was considerably smaller of person, and we have no difficulty in at once recognizing in him our friend Joris Ruikmans, even though we had not learned that Joris had escaped to these parts to be rid of Dame Ruikmans's "epistle-reading," and had found employment in this very prison. He was carrying two loaves of coarse bread under his left arm, and an earthen bottle of water in his hand.

"I tell you this is a pretty hard climb," said the fat man, who was the jailer, seating himself upon a step about halfway up the staircase. "I do not understand why His Excellency Philip Derot has put the heretic up so high. Such fellows go directly to hell, at any rate, and therefore it would have been better to have put him in one of the lower cells, for that would have been closer to his future dwelling-place."

"I do not find it so hard to go up stairs," observed Joris, likewise seating himself. "But I think the reverend judges were very wise to put that heretic so high up; there he is high and dry, and cannot possibly escape unless he can crawl

through the air-hole near the top of the wall of his cell."

"A fine thing!" said the fat man, wiping the perspiration from his face. "He escape? What are you thinking of? Have you forgotten that the air-hole looks out upon the moat, and that it is provided with thick iron bars? Besides, is he not chained to the wall? How, then, could he get away? He cannot possibly escape unless he is in league with the evil one, and St. Joseph prevent that!"

The jailer crossed himself reverently three several times, as if he feared that even the thought of him might cause a personal contact with His Satanic Majesty.

"What are chains to a heretic?" asked Joris, contemptuously. "With a little file chains and bars can soon be cut through."

The jailer became red in the face with vexation at this suggestion of his assistant.

"Stupid fellow!" he broke out. "How is that heretic going to get at any files? Do you not know that when he came here he was stripped as naked as Adam when in Paradise? Everything was taken from him. And who would provide him with files now? Not I, surely; for you know that I am answerable with my head for his safe-keeping. I cannot sleep at night at the very idea of his escaping, and to be sure that he is safe in the

daytime I take the trouble to go up four times a day to see that he is in his cell. No one can get at him but myself, for I hold the key to his cell; that key goes not out of my hand for a single minute, and at night I put it under my pillow. Who, then, is going to bring him a file, or anything of that sort?"

"Yes, that is what I say too," replied Joris, who replaced the loaves carefully under his arm, as if he feared something might drop from them. "That must be a sly fox who will fetch him anything of that sort."

"Well said, Joris! or, rather, it must be a smart man who can cheat *me*, for you know I am pretty sharp, and whoever wants to fool me will have to get up very early in the morning." The latter expression he repeated twice, and laughed heartily, as if fully satisfied with his abilities as jailer.

Joris looked at the round, fat face of his superior, but said nothing.

"I was just thinking," said the jailer, after resting a few minutes longer, "how merciful our holy Inquisition has been in its treatment of this heretic."

"How so?" asked Joris, with a look and tone of voice as if he found some difficulty in reconciling this opinion with the facts.

"Why, because, instead of burning or hanging him in public or putting him to the rack, they let

him sit here at his ease. That is all expense for nothing; he has to be kept in board—”

“Well, that does not come to so very much,” interrupted the manikin. “Two loaves of coarse bread a week and a bottle of water every three days: I cannot say he will grow very fat on that.”

“No, I do not believe he will,” assented the jailer. “But, according to my view, it is much better to make short work with such people; then we would be spared much care and trouble. For it is no fun to clamber up these stairs four times a day. I do not see the use of it.”

“But I have heard,” said Joris, “that this is an exceptional case. Did not the Inquisition promise his mother not to put him to death publicly, on which condition she bequeathed all her wealth to the Church?”

“Yes, that may be so,” said the fat man, “but some other means of getting rid of him and getting around that promise might have been found besides letting him die of slow starvation. I have orders to lessen his allowance by a little every week. How lean that heretic will get! But come,” he continued, rising and picking up the keys; “we have rested long enough. Let us go up and finish this job. So much the sooner shall we be down again.”

Groaning and muttering as he went, the jailer addressed himself to the remainder of the ascent,

stumbling with his foot against almost every step. When at last they reached the upper hall, Joris and he went to the farther one of the two doors. Passing through this into the corridor beyond, they soon stopped before one of the cells. The jailer placed his ear against the door and whispered to Joris :

“He seems to be asleep ; everything is as still as a mouse inside. How is it possible that a heretic can sleep, especially after having been pretty well stretched on the rack a few days ago ? But hark ! now I hear him rattle the chain. It must be from the itching of his wounds, for Simon, the executioner, tickled him pretty severely.”

With these heartless words the fat man put the key into the lock, and the door turned creaking upon its hinges. This gave access to a small square vestibule totally dark.

“Draw the slide, Joris,” said the jailer, “and call the heretic this way. I will turn myself, for I do not want to look at him ; I might be poisoned by the sight of him. Hand him the bottle and the two loaves, but shut the slide immediately after. Do you understand ?”

“Certainly,” replied the manikin, who held the loaves under his arm while he sat down the bottle in order to open a slide in the inner door of the cell.

“Do not be so long,” said the jailer, turning

away his head. "Hurry up! The heretic does not deserve that we waste so much time on him."

Joris opened the slide, through which poured the light from the cell, which was introduced into the latter by means of a round aperture high up in the wall, opposite the door.

"Here!" called Joris through the opening.

The clanking of a chain which the jailer had heard a moment before became louder. A young man rose from a stone bench and came to the door, dragging the chain, which only just permitted him to reach it. His countenance was deadly pale and excessive suffering had graven deep lines upon cheeks and forehead, but nevertheless in this youth we recognize none other than Antoine Moreau.

"Here is a bottle of water—" began Joris.

"Tell him to be careful of it," said the jailer, with averted face, "as after this he will get it only once every three days."

Joris passed the bottle through the opening, and the prisoner reached out for it with his emaciated hands and set it upon the floor. At the same time, as if by accident or clumsiness, Joris let the loaves fall from his hands after passing them through the slide, and said in a vexed tone,

"There! that is for you to eat, you heretic!"

"But," said the fat man when he had heard the loaves fall, "he must eat moderately, for he has to do a whole week with them."

"I thank God," said the prisoner, "that he has taught me to be content with little, and the apostle Paul—"

"Joris, shut the slide! Shut the slide quick!" cried the jailer, clapping his hands over his ears. "Do you not hear the heretic talking? He poisons us. The slide! the slide! Quick!"

The manikin did as he was ordered, but not before he had taken occasion to call the prisoner's attention to one of the loaves, at the same time making a significant gesture with his finger. Then the two men stepped into the corridor and the jailer locked the outer door. As they descended to their own apartments the fat official indulged in the pleasantries,

"Well, he will be likely to forget the taste of tarts and pastries before long."

CHAPTER XXX.

A MOTHER'S DEATH-BED.

ANTOINE MOREAU was thus a prisoner and at the mercy of the Inquisition. Truly, he had cherished other expectations than those of being confined between walls and behind doors which were seldom opened except when those held captive by them were carried to the grave. In the glad hope of seeing her whom he loved as his life he had hastened to her embrace, but how sadly had he been disappointed ! After a journey beset by great difficulties, and during which he and his companion, by reason of the confusion existing in the relations between the northern and the southern Netherlands, were frequently compelled to conceal themselves by day and travel only by night, they at length reached the neighborhood of Courtray. To his sorrow, Antoine had noticed that the supposed doctor would never enter into any conversation about the love of Jesus and communion with him. The only subject which seemed greatly to interest Florentius Digo was that of the Reformation, and, as the youthful printer was an ardent advocate of that cause, the

conferences were very lively, especially on the side of Antoine Moreau. The Jesuit on these occasions, with characteristic shrewdness and faithful to the society to which he was devoted heart and soul, made it his business to lure on the unsuspecting and enthusiastic youth into statements and declarations of opinion or belief which were to be used against him with deadly force. Little did Antoine suppose that he was placing in the hands of his enemies fearful weapons which they would not be slow to use for his destruction.

The nearer Courtray was approached, the more burning became Antoine's longing to see his mother. Just at evening of a certain day the city was entered; now but a few hours, and he would be with her.

"Do you think, doctor," he asked as he and the Jesuit were ascending a hill from the summit of which he could discern the steeple of the village church of his native place—"do you think mother is still living?"

"I am very sure of it," the other replied.

"How she will rejoice to see me!" exclaimed Antoine, stretching out his arms toward the beloved home, "and how happy will I be to press her to my heart!—Oh, my dear, dear mother!—Come, doctor, let us hurry. It is with me as with the soul that David describes in the psalm: I am faint with longing." His eyes filled with tears.

For some time Antoine and the Jesuit pursued their way in silence, but suddenly there crossed the mind of the youth a thought which sickened him with dread. He turned to Florentius Digo with strong emotion depicted in his countenance, as before, but heightened by an apprehension of danger which was new to it and had not been noticed by the Jesuit during all the journey. Seizing his companion's arm, Antoine inquired eagerly,

“Doctor, do you know Father Benedictus?”

The practiced features of the Jesuit betrayed no sign of the inward consternation that took hold of him, for he feared that the youth at last suspected his real character, and that this was a leading question to test the suspicion. Nevertheless, he spoke with the utmost calmness as he replied:

“Father Benedictus, did you say? Yes, I have heard him mentioned. What do you mean?”

“I mean that he is my enemy.”

“Come, come! do not think of that now. It was but yesterday that you told me you did not fear the future, and that you place your trust in the Lord. Show this now.”

“Yes, I will do so. Come, doctor, let us go on.”

It was not long ere the village of Monne was entered. Antoine led the way straight to the well-known house. To his surprise, a number of people stood about the door.

“What means this?” he asked of a man who

was unknown to him, and who seemed to be on guard at the door.

"The clergy are in the sick-room," was the reply. "Madame Moreau is receiving the supreme unction of our holy Church, for she is dying."

Antoine uttered a cry, pushed aside the man, who sought to detain him, and entered the house. He looked around for Florentius Digo, but the latter had disappeared.

The hall was filled with people—choir-boys, assistants at the altar, and others—holding burning tapers in their hands. Antoine did not permit any one to detain him, but hastened to the chamber where his mother lay dying. Arrived there, he wished to force his way to her bedside; but this was impossible, for, first, the room was so full of persons that he could penetrate no farther than the door, and, further, it would not do to interrupt the solemnity which was in progress. He therefore lifted his head as high as he could that nothing might escape his eye. What met his glance? Madame Moreau lay upon her bed; a little lamp suspended from the ceiling cast its feeble light upon her pale features. Two priests, one of whom was at once recognized by Antoine as Father Benedictus—stood at the right side of the bedstead, while the daughter of the dying woman knelt near her. It seemed that the last sacrament had been administered, and that she was now left to take

some repose; but, although repose of body was thus afforded her, her mind seemed ill at ease. She raised herself and said in broken sentences,

“I keep you to your word—reverend sir: you will not—touch his life. Perhaps—he may be—won back—from his errors—by gentleness and—love.”

“Set your mind at rest,” was the soothing reply of Father Benedictus; “we shall keep to our agreement, and shall do all that can possibly be done, according both to your wish and to mine, to reclaim him; and howsoever obstinate he may be, still, should we get him among us again, we shall not put him to death.”

These assurances seemed, indeed, to pacify the dying lady, but a moment after she said,

“Is it probable that I shall see him again before I die?”

“Mother,” said her daughter, reproachfully, “how can you let your thoughts occupy themselves with this apostate in your last hour? Think, rather, about me—about your own soul.”

“Marie,” sighed the dying woman, “you know not how I love him. He was lost and found again, and that finding was like a second birth, and those six years of aching anxiety endeared him ten hundred fold. And never has he ceased to love his mother—always most tenderly devoted. Oh that I might see him once again—but once!”

"He may come yet," whispered Benedictus.

"Perhaps he has come. Oh, my son ! Antoine, my son, my son !" cried the sufferer.

The broken sentences, even this last cry, had been too feeble to reach Antoine. The daughter now laid her hand upon the lips of her dying mother.

"Do not pronounce that name, mother," she said, bitterly ; "he is a heretic and must not be named in the presence of our clergy. Be silent and pray what Father Benedictus will tell you."

But the mother could not be silenced ; as the moment approached when her spirit must leave the body the anxiety and yearning of her heart became the more irrepressible. Spreading out her hands, she called, in a voice distinctly audible throughout the room,

"My son ! My son Antoine !"

The last words reached the ears of the youth, who uttered a cry and pushed his way through the throng.

Madame Moreau, on her part, had caught her son's cry ; she lifted her eyes and turned them in the direction whence it came, saying,

"The voice of my son !"

"Mother, mother !" exclaimed Antoine, forcing his way to her bedside. "Mother, I am here—I, your son !" He fell on his knees by her side, clasped the hands of the dying woman in his own and pressed a kiss upon her pale lips.



At the same instant Marie sprang to her feet, and with the cry, "A heretic! a heretic!" retreated as far as possible from the bed.

The two priests saw Antoine's approach, but did not hinder it; on the contrary, one whispered to the other,

"Ha! Florentius Digo has, then, succeeded in placing this heretic in our power. Look to it that he does not escape us."

"My son," stammered Jeanne Moreau, "I am glad that—I can see you—once more—before I die. I believe that this—will soon happen. I feel that—"

"Mother," said Antoine, who had risen and was bending over her, "do you die in peace?"

The dying woman made no answer.

One of the priests now drew near to push Antoine away.

"Oh, mother," exclaimed the youth, "is it for this I was to return and see you die? Oh, tell me: is your trust in Jesus?"

The priest laid his hand upon Antoine's shoulder, but the latter would not be diverted from his purpose; the salvation of his beloved mother was at stake.

The dying woman heaved a deep sigh, and that sigh was "Jesus!" In a moment came back to her impressions received years ago, while she was with those who had preserved and restored her child to

her. Something of that experience of a personal Saviour and a direct connection on his part with her life came back to her as she had described it to her friend the Lady Jacoba. Long had it been obscured by the ceremonies and errors of the papal Church, but in this supreme moment, in the happiness of having her son with her and reviving the sense of God's providential nearness, that preciousness of an own and only Saviour illuminated her mind and quickened her heart.

Antoine pressed Christ upon her thoughts.

"Yes, dear mother," he said, "look to Jesus. Oh, believe in him. He loves you. Call on him—call now. Say, 'Lord Jesus, accept me!'"

"Lord—Jesus—ac—" and with that prayer, unfinished on the lips, but fully felt in the soul and seen by God, she breathed her last.

Antoine threw himself upon her lifeless form and burst into tears.

In the same instant a cart stopped in front of the house, and shortly after there was a movement among the crowd in that chamber of death. Reverently they drew aside and made way for a man who, followed by a clergyman, approached the bed by the side of which knelt Antoine.

"Antoine Moreau!" spoke this man, with penetrating voice, laying his hand upon the youth's shoulder.

Antoine turned; there stood before him Philip

Derot, superior of the Jesuits, the highest judge of the Inquisition.

"Antoine Moreau," he said, "in the name of the Inquisition you are my prisoner."

Antoine was struck by a momentary dread, but it was only for a moment; for now that the Lord had permitted him to see his mother again, and even to hear her call in faith upon the name of Jesus, it was a matter of indifference to him what became of himself. He rose to his feet, and, looking Philip Derot fearlessly in the face, he demanded,

"For what cause am I your prisoner?"

"You are a heretic."

"A heretic! a heretic!" resounded through the room, while many hastily crossed themselves.

"I a heretic?" responded Antoine. "By the grace of God I am his child. Look to yourself that you do not draw down upon your own head the judgment of the Lord."

"Men," cried Philip Derot, to whom this exchange of words was extremely distasteful for many reasons—"men, apprehend this heretic. Take him to the cart and convey him to Tournay."

A number of soldiers, who had come with the cart, entered the room and seized Antoine, though not before he had imprinted one last kiss upon the marble forehead of his mother. He allowed himself to be bound and led away without a struggle. At the door he passed his sister.

"Marie," he said, "remember that some time you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. He will be your Saviour now; cast your idols away from you and flee to him."

"Heretic! heretic!" she cried, stopping her ears.

"Away with him!" commanded Philip Derot.

The soldiers pushed Antoine out of the house. By means of the torchlight he recognized a man who seemed desirous of remaining unnoticed.

"Thus you have been my betrayer!" said Antoine. "What will be your reward?"

"Salvation for preserving a soul," replied Florentius Digo, who then hastily retired.

Antoine, with four of the soldiers, ascended the cart, the others surrounding it as a guard, and the journey to Tournay was begun. The next day he was placed in the prison where we have discovered him. From the moment that he had entered the prison the clergy had given him no rest. His body had been placed on the rack and tortured, to force him to name those who had persuaded him to embrace heretical opinions or to make him abjure those opinions and promise to return to the bosom of the Romish Church. But his tormentors met with no success. Now it had finally been resolved to let him slowly die of hunger and of thirst.

And Florentius Digo called this *the preservation of a soul!*

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LOAF OF BREAD.

ANTOINE MOREAU was seated upon the stone bench in his cell. Behind him was a niche which had been cut into the wall, and upon the projecting slab that formed the bottom of this niche he had placed the loaves which Joris had let fall through the slide. The stone bottle filled with water stood at his feet, and he had at once taken a liberal draught from it, because he suffered from an almost intolerable thirst. He would gladly have drank more, were it not that he had been warned to be sparing in the use of his bread and water.

This warning was but too well founded. We have learned, as well from the conversation between the jailer and Joris as from what took place at the death-bed of Madame Jeanne Moreau, that the Jesuits were compelled to restrict themselves to torture and imprisonment in regard to this victim, and were not at liberty to execute him in public. On this condition alone had Jeanne Moreau consented to write to her son the letter with which the Jesuit Florentius Digo had been sent to Leyden,

to ensnare therewith the fondly-devoted youth. The Inquisition thus had not scrupled to make use of a son's affection in order to effect the purposes of its hatred, and the act of the mother was to be deplored in allowing herself to be deluded into delivering her own son into the hands of his enemies. But, alas! to what extremes may not religious hatred and erroneous views sometimes conduct people! Still, Madame Moreau had had no peace after the act, and in the hour of death she demanded the repetition of the assurance that her son would not be put to death.

The Inquisition—for what reason has not clearly been ascertained, for in other cases it kept or violated its word as circumstances might dictate—strictly held itself to the promise made. All public trial and public execution had been avoided, but in secret it allowed itself the more license to trouble and torment the unfortunate youth. Not only had provision been made that Antoine should be slowly starved to death, but care was taken that he should in no way escape. Loaded with a chain which was riveted into the wall, the prison-keeper had been made personally responsible for Antoine's safekeeping, and hence this official was compelled to undertake that arduous duty of climbing the two staircases and looking through the slide of the inner cell-door to convince himself that the prisoner was within. This had now been going on

for more than three months, and it need not be told how often the Jesuits had troubled Antoine with their visits and their disputes. He had also suffered greatly in body. As he sat there upon the stone bench he might well have been called an object of pity. Yet in the midst of it all he was "of good courage."

There were a few things, however, that especially troubled Antoine. His thoughts often reverted to Walter Harmsen. It grieved him much, in his present situation, that he had not confided more in this friend. Could he but see him once more, that he might ask his pardon for the sorrow which he had caused him! But this was impossible; communication between himself and the outer world was hopelessly cut off, and unless the Lord should work an unexpected deliverance he would never meet the evangelist. Another thought that gave the young man much concern was about his mother. His wish had been gratified; he had seen her before her death. But how? In what condition? Dying in the midst of a multitude of ecclesiastics, who kept from her the Bread of life and did not point her to that Jesus who alone can save. True, he had succeeded in speaking to her a few words of Jesus, and she had even repeated his words after him, as if she had made them her own. But was she saved? Had she departed in the faith? This question at times filled Antoine with great anxiety.

He could not, of course, know what former experiences of a near and personal Saviour were awakened within his mother's heart at the words of her son. Often in the night would he awake suddenly with the exclamation upon his lips, "Mother, art thou with the Lord?"

A still further cause of sadness was the lack of a Bible. As we know, Antoine had parted with the two volumes of the Paedts edition as a present to his friend Harmsen. He thought of it with fond remembrance and with great longing for its comforting and strengthening pages. He did not regret leaving these identical volumes behind him; he knew too well that it would have been preposterous to have expected to be left in possession of them by the Inquisition. Antoine, therefore, mourned the loss of his Bible principally because he was now deprived of the needed spiritual nourishment. Had he but a few pages in his possession, he could have endured with more patience his imprisonment and loneliness.

While occupied with these thoughts the captive turned, and his eye fell upon the two loaves of bread, which lay within the niche. Without being particularly hungry, he mechanically picked up one of them to break it and eat a few mouthfuls. As he took it into his hands he noticed something peculiar about it. A little reed projected from it, but so carefully was it concealed that an ordinary

observer would have taken it for a piece of hardened dough. At the same time Antoine recalled the fact that the assistant jailer had directed his attention to one of the loaves with all kinds of queer gestures which he had not been able to interpret. He loosened the bread around the reed and drew it from the loaf; he next broke the loaf to pieces, to look if it contained other matters of interest. But neither this nor the other loaf yielded anything further to his search. He now took the reed, and felt at once that it was much heavier than those that ordinarily grow on the banks of rivers. There must, therefore, be inside of it something which had been purposely hidden there. He peeled off the successive layers; and when he reached the inside, he discovered a piece of printed paper rolled into very small compass and enclosing another paper. Who shall describe his joy when he recognized in the printed paper a leaf from his own cherished Bible? He gazed in ecstasy upon the well-known and beloved lines marked at former perusals, and the first verse that caught his attention was this: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." On closer examination Antoine found that it was pages 470 and 471 of the Paedts edition of the Bible, containing the last verse of the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel, and the two following chapters entire. What

could be more comforting to one in his situation than the chapter which recorded the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper? What wonder was it that in his transport of joy he pressed to his lips the unconscious pages that yet were so eloquent with the words of life? Forgetting where he was, he broke forth into one of the hymns which Walter Harmsen had taught him. While singing he proceeded with his investigations, and as he unrolled the second paper there fell from it a piece of iron, which proved to be a fine and thin but very sharp file. He hardly saw of what use this tool could be to him, for what mattered it to him whether he was free from his chains or not? It was impossible for him to escape from his cell. While these reflections were passing through his mind he unfolded the paper that had held the file, and found that it contained writing. The hand seemed to have been purposely disguised, which made the words difficult to decipher. After some time, however, he made out about the following:

“File through the bars of the air-hole at the four corners, but in such a way that they can be replaced during the day. Work only at night. Remain awake the third night after this, and watch the opening. A faithful friend watches and prays in your behalf.

“W. H.”

Antoine read these lines several times, and many questions rose to his mind :

“How can I file these bars through? That opening is beyond my reach. And even if I could reach it, to what purpose should I loosen the bars? Is it meant that I shall escape by that way? But that is impossible, for it does not seem that I could much more than put my head through it. And again, if I could force myself through, what then? The outer wall descends sheer down into the moat, and I could not let myself fall into that without incurring certain death. Yet there seems to be haste, for I must be ready on the third night, and must watch the aperture. Who could have written this paper? ‘W. H.’—‘A faithful friend.’ I know but one who answers both these designations, and that is Walter Harmsen.”

The clock of the prison struck four, and Antoine remembered with sudden fear that this was the hour when the fat jailer was accustomed to appear before the slide to satisfy himself that all was safe within the cell. He looked about for a place where he could conceal the reed, the two pieces of paper and the file, that nothing might remain to rouse the suspicions of the official. He found a small space between the slabs of the stone bench and the brick foundation that supported it, and hastily thrust these articles into it.

At this moment the outer door opened. Antoine

next awaited the customary drawing of the slide through which the jailer was wont to look and call him by name. To his astonishment, however, the inner door was also opened and two persons entered, accompanied by two servants, who each carried a lamp, because, it being early in November, the evening had begun to fall. With no little dread Antoine recognized these persons as Father Benedictus and Philip Derot, who on entering the cell looked in all directions, as if expecting to find something, and observed with particular care the air-hole, that was protected by two iron bars placed crosswise. Antoine remained quietly seated.

Philip Derot at length confronted the youth and spoke in a tone of authority :

"Antoine Moreau, I have been told that you were singing a while ago. Is that so?"

"It is," replied Antoine, calmly.

"What were you singing?"

"A hymn of praise to God."

"A heretic song?"

"No," answered the youth, firmly ; "a Christian song."

"How can you sing in such a place as this? Has something occurred which moved you to express your joy?"

This question startled Antoine for an instant, for the superior had come very near the fact, but it would have been ruinous to admit it :

"I was thinking of a comforting passage, and this gave me such joy that I could not refrain from singing."

"And what passage was this?" asked the superior of the Jesuits.

"This: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'"

"Then you consider yourself in tribulation?"

"It seems to me," said Antoine, with emphasis, "that this prison affords some evidence of it."

"But it is a tribulation which you have obstinately and willfully drawn down upon yourself," said Father Benedictus. "It is your own voluntary act, because you have only to renounce your heretic convictions and you will be free."

"The apostle Paul," began Antoine, "says that—"

"Oh, keep still about your apostle Paul! Our holy Church teaches that all those who depart from her faith are heretics and must be punished with death. You may regard it as an evidence of our great mercy and forbearance that we have not as yet gone to such extremes with you, trusting that you will yet return to the bosom of our Church."

"I cannot do so. I have devoted myself, soul and body, to the Lord Jesus, and would commit an act of gross unfaithfulness to him if I should return to your Church."

"But surely our Church serves Christ—"

"Yes, but besides him, and together with him, many saints. Your Church is hostile to the truth, inasmuch as she persecutes and kills those who love and preach the word of God. Your Church declares—"

"Be silent, heretic!" interrupted Philip Derot. "We perceive that you remain as hard of heart as ever, and that you will go to perdition with your lies."

"The Holy Spirit says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' I need have no fear, accordingly, of going to perdition, since by the grace of Jesus I am his."

"Again I command you to be silent," said Derot. "You are not our instructor; it is nothing but your pernicious pride that makes you speak thus. But we will find means to humble you: after this you shall have but half a bottle of water and one loaf of bread per week."

Derot ordered his victim to rise and go the length of his chain.

"You perceive, reverend sir," said Father Benedictus, "that the heretic cannot possibly reach the air-hole."

"I am convinced of it. Our keeper may set his mind at rest on this score."

"No, he cannot hope to escape," said Benedictus, with a smile.

“Though a thousand devils came to his aid,” added the superior, in the same vein. “Even in that case he would not be benefited, for I have thought of an infallible means to frustrate any attempts to befriend him on the part of the evil one.—Men,” he continued, turning to the servants, who stood near the wall with the lamps, “fetch the image of our Holy Virgin. The jailer is at the door of the corridor, and will assist you.”

The two servants placed the lamps within the niche and left the cell, soon returning with an image of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus. Unfortunately, there was no fitting place for this defender against evil spirits; for the niche was too small, and to place the image upon the floor or in a corner would be desecration. There was, therefore, no way to but to place it upon the bench.

“The heretic can sit upon the floor,” said Philip Derot.

“He will have to,” remarked Benedictus. “Saints are of more account than are heretics.”

“Very true,” said the superior. “Now let us go; everything seems in order.”

“I notice nothing out of the way,” was the Father’s reply. “Still, shall we take one more look?—Here, men, light us with your lamps.”

The servants complied with this command, and now every corner of the cell was carefully searched, and even the damp straw which constituted An-

toine's bed, was taken up and scattered; next the chains were sharply examined. The niche, too, was not forgotten.

"There may be hid something under the bench," suggested Philip Derot. "Who knows what the evil spirits may have brought the heretic?—Bend down, men, and see if you can discover anything."

Antoine Moreau scarcely breathed in the anxiety of the moment, and sent up a fervent prayer to God for help.

"Take no trouble, reverend sir," said a voice from between the two doors, where Joris Ruikmans had remained standing after opening the doors for the clergymen—"take no trouble to examine the stone bench. This very morning the bench and everything in its vicinity were thoroughly examined and washed."

"Then cease further examination," commanded Derot, "and let us go."

The two servants went before with the lamps. Philip Derot and Father Benedictus cast parting glances full of aversion at the prisoner, and followed. Joris locked both doors, and Antoine remained alone, staring at the white image through the darkness. He waited till he could no longer hear any sounds of the retreating party, and then felt no scruples whatever in taking Mary gently by the arm and placing her in a corner, while he himself resumed his seat upon the bench.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WORKING BY NIGHT.

AFTER some moments Antoine bent down and drew from its hiding-place the treasure which had escaped the eyes of his enemies. It was now time to heed the directions of the little note urging him to file through the bars of the loophole. He could not as yet quite understand the purpose of this request, but he was, of course, convinced that this counsel had not proceeded from his enemies. There was an understanding between himself and the foster-parent of his youth, Joris Ruikmans, but instinctively they had jealously guarded against the least sign of recognition, lest any means of aid which lay within the power of the assistant jailer might be frustrated by even a suspicion of sympathy. The motions of Joris now put it beyond a peradventure that he was in the secret of the contents of the loaf; and if so, friends must be at work to secure Antoine's release in some way. Hence he resolved to do exactly as told, and to wait till later for explanations. However, before he could undertake the task specified in the note, he

must relieve himself of the chain which held him to the wall; accordingly, he immediately addressed himself to this labor. It was to be accomplished with great nicety and in such a way that it would not be observed by day. The operation, though a delicate one, required also an exertion of strength which was quite a tax upon Antoine's exhausted frame. He could not, therefore, make rapid headway, and the prison clock sounded twelve before his hand was freed from the chain. The drops of sweat streamed from his forehead, and he felt so weak and weary after this unusual expenditure of energy that he was compelled to cast himself upon his pallet of straw to regain his strength. The relief from the heavy chain was very grateful, yet he endeavored not to fall asleep, for time was precious.

After resting a few moments, Antoine sprang to his feet, prayed to the Lord for support and help, and went to the wall in which was the aperture that communicated with the outer air. But this was much too high to be reached even with the outstretched hand. His cell contained nothing that could afford him a footing while he filed the bars; the bench upon which he sat during the day was a piece of masonry that could not be moved at will about the apartment. What, then, was to be done? But Necessity is the mother of Invention. He divested himself of his waistcoat, tore it into

long strips, tied these together, and after many attempts succeeded in throwing this substitute for a rope around one of the bars in such a way that the end dropped down. Pulling it even with the other end, he had a means of drawing himself up. But he must have something on which to place his feet. The wall inclined slightly inward, and, feeling about in every direction, he discovered one stone or brick which was somewhat loose. He found that with a little effort he could remove and replace it at will. Taking it from its position, there was afforded a precarious footing by the hole. Lifting himself up and placing one foot here, he found he could reach the bars at every point. He at once applied the file to one end of the transverse bar, but the iron being of the hardest quality, and the danger of discovery forbidding too much noise, the labor promised to be none of the shortest or the easiest. Besides this, the position which he was compelled to assume was a most painful and difficult one. His left hand must hold the strips of his waistcoat, while only one foot at a time could rest upon the support in the wall; soon, therefore, he was forced to descend through utter exhaustion. After half an hour of rest he again addressed himself to his task; but it was only with intervals of rest that he could continue the labor. In this way he had filed through one end of the horizontal bar, and had made some progress with an incision

into the other end, when the day broke, and he must stop his work till another night. Now he undid the strips, wound them about his bare body, replaced file and papers in their hiding-place, again attached himself to the chain, thanked God for the help he had vouchsafed him, and cast himself upon the straw to rest from his wearying labors.

The day passed without any disturbing events except the four customary visits from the jailer. Antoine sought to gain as much sleep as possible through the day, so as not to suffer from the want of it at night, and to gain as much strength as he could for the accomplishment of his object. When night came, he again went to work with a will; but, being a little better inured to the difficulties of his task, he achieved much more than on the previous night. Before daybreak the four ends of the upright and transverse bars were severed, but the bars were left in position, as if perfectly sound. The day was passed in expectation, and at last the period designated in the note was at hand.

Although not mentioned in so many words in the note, Antoine surmised it would be in accordance with the intention of the writer if he were to remove the bars. This was not easily effected, and he received many bruises in the process of lowering them to the floor. While he had been engaged upon his work on the previous night he had noticed by the light of a young moon that there was a small

piece of woods on the other side of the moat, coming to the water's edge. Having removed the bars, he now took the image of the Virgin from the position it occupied by day and sat himself upon the bench, directing his eyes to the aperture and prayerfully awaiting events.

Antoine had sat thus watching intently for about half an hour, when he heard some object strike the outside of the wall and then fall into the water. What could this be? He listened eagerly. Again something was thrown against the wall, seeming to strike nearer the opening, but it too plunged into the water. The riddle was now readily solved: some one on the opposite side of the moat was trying to throw something to him, which was a very difficult experiment, considering the smallness of the aperture and the greatness of the distance. But a third attempt proved successful: an object came tumbling through the loophole and fell in the middle of the floor. Hurriedly picking it up, Antoine found it to be a little bundle wrapped in oiled linen; there was a stout cord attached to it. He first thought that this had been used to swing the bundle and give it the necessary impulse, but as he pulled at it to draw it within his cell there seemed to be no end to it. The greater part was wet, showing that it had passed through the water of the moat. Pretty soon the cord became thicker, and at its termination a network of ropes seemed

to come falling into the cell. At first it greatly puzzled Antoine to make out what this was; but when he had it all within his reach, he saw that it formed a sort of rope-ladder. Next he removed the wrapper of oiled linen from the bundle; the inside had not suffered from water, and the first object that presented itself was a piece of white paper covered with writing in a very large hand. The moon was sending a few feeble rays through the narrow opening, and, catching these upon the paper, it cost Antoine no great effort to read the following: "Immediately place the bars back in their former position, in token that you have received the bundle. Watch to-morrow night." He at once hastened to comply with this direction.

Antoine next investigated the bundle. Who can imagine his delight when he found one of the volumes of his Paedts Bible? The feeble moonlight did not permit him to read any of the fine print, but he could see enough to show him that it was one of his own volumes which he had presented to Walter Harmsen. He also found between its pages a letter covered within and without with writing, and he longed eagerly for the daylight, when he might ascertain its contents.

But, pleased as the prisoner was for the moment at receiving these various articles, they brought him, likewise, into no little perplexity. Where should he hide all these objects? The walls no-

where offered a recess or hole convenient for this purpose. And yet every vestige of them must be removed from sight before the first visit of the jailer, at the dawn of day ; a portion of the cord, and even the rope-ladder, he could wind about his body and conceal under his clothes, but what was to be done with the Bible and the wrapper of oiled linen ? He ran up and down his cell in despair, looking in vain for some hiding-place. Suddenly his eye fell upon the image of Mary, and a happy idea struck him. He turned the image upside down, and perceived that it was hollow and promised ample room to receive all the articles he wished to conceal. Having deposited them in such a way that the upright position of the image would not disgorge them, he placed it upon the bench, smiling to himself at the duty which the charmer of evil spirits was compelled to perform. Having now restored order to his cell, he laid himself upon his straw and fell asleep. How long he had slept he did not know, but he did not wake till he was aroused by the voice of the persistent jailer. Fortunately, the latter did not make even as long a stay as usual, brief as that was ; and, rising from his pallet and thanking God, Antoine took the letter from the image and began to read.

We will not reproduce the entire letter, contenting ourselves with an account of its chief points of interest to us. It was in the handwriting of

Walter Harmsen, and began, "Dear friend and brother in our Lord Jesus Christ! May the Lord grant you to enjoy his nearness, and to taste the precious consolation of his Holy Spirit." Next he informed Antoine that after numberless efforts to ascertain his whereabouts—conducted, of course, under the profoundest secrecy—he had finally succeeded in discovering where he was confined, and that he and some friends, whose names, for obvious reasons, he would not mention, had been maturing plans for effecting his escape. Further, he counseled him to take good care of the rope-ladder, because it would be explained to him later on what he was to do, while the writer requested Antoine to remove the bars from the opening during the three succeeding nights. Whatever might happen, he could be assured that the writer suffered great anxiety on his account, but that he would remain faithful unto death.

It may be imagined what cheer these lines brought to Antoine, filling him with the assurance of the love and care of friends and awakening the hope of deliverance from his enemies. Much consolation was also afforded him in the hours of his solitude by the quickening pages of God's word. Every moment of the day when he could do this safely he was occupied in this profitable exercise.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RESCUE INTERRUPTED.

DAYS grew into weeks, during which Antoine Moreau continued to hold communication with his friends in the way described in the preceding chapter. He received, always by means of a bundle thrown skillfully through the aperture, a number of articles which were of comfort to him in his loneliness. But all information regarding the state of things or the progress of plans outside of the prison was carefully kept from him, lest it should fall into hands for which it was not destined. And it was understood between him and his friends that whenever the bars remained unremoved it was a sign that nothing should be attempted that night. Provision had also been made to relieve him from superfluous articles by advising him to attach such objects to the string in the place of the bundle newly conveyed, when they would be drawn back by the parties who had sent the others. This was a very necessary measure, for the accommodating image could hardly have contained an unlimited supply of oiled-linen wrappers or coils of rope,

and the vigilant eyes of his jailers must always be remembered.

Meanwhile, Antoine's supply of food—consisting of one loaf of bread per week and half a bottle of water within the same period—was so small that it scarcely sufficed for two days. Hunger so greatly distressed him that during the night preceding the day on which his supply was renewed he could not sleep, but moaned continually for food. And his sufferings from thirst were none the less. Fervently did he long for deliverance; he prayed that he might at least see Walter Harmsen before his death, which he looked forward to as certainly near at hand, whether he should be rescued or not.

We shall see whether this prayer was heard. Before it was to be answered, however, if answered at all, Antoine was destined to suffer much anxiety, and even to relapse into despair of ever leaving his prison. Without previous warning all communication with his friends suddenly ceased. Two, three nights in succession Antoine removed the bars and listened patiently for the welcome sounds against the outer wall, but in vain. He was possessed by the apprehension that everything had been discovered, and that accordingly he would be watched more keenly than ever. He also feared that his friends might have been detected, and possibly arrested and imprisoned. His cell became more dreary than ever as he thought of these possibili-

ties, and for one last assurance that all was well with them he would gladly have restored all he had obtained from them hitherto. But he received none, and the effects of starvation became daily more painful. His strength was so greatly reduced that he could scarcely reach the bars, and at last he could not do so except on the night after he had received his allowance of bread and water. Had his friends forsaken him? For an explanation we will need to cast a glance at events outside the prison.

At the distance of about six miles from Tournay was situated the village of Leers. Hidden among woods of lofty oak and beech trees, the traveler between Courtray and Tournay would hardly notice it; but if by accident he had lost his way and happened unexpectedly upon it, he could have found no reason to complain, for Nature here was very attractive. Not far from the village stood the old castle of the count of Leers, who had been beheaded at Brussels ten years before for heresy. The castle was now unoccupied, and at such times as troops found it convenient to stop at the village on their way to or from the scene of the campaign the venerable building was made a barracks by the reckless bands, who plundered orchard and garden or hunted the game stocking in great plenty the surrounding forest. At the foot of a hill not far from the unoccupied castle lived a farmer familiarly

known as "the Hollander," because some years previous to the time of our tale he had come from Holland and settled here on a farm which had been bequeathed to him by a relative. The Hollander—whom for convenience we shall continue thus to designate—was a man of some forty years of age. In his youth he had become acquainted with the doctrines of the Reformation through the preaching of Walter Harmsen, and was by no means averse to these doctrines. But his settlement in the South had somewhat modified his opinions. For fear of making an ado, as well as because he had no mind to risk his life and possessions, he had never quite shown what he really felt, but was ever waiting for some better condition of affairs in the land, when he would openly confess his leaning to the Reformation.

By chance, as people are apt to say, the Hollander had come into contact with Joris Ruikmans. When Joris traveled about as a peddler of dry goods in the vicinity of the cities of Leyden and The Hague, this farmer had met him more than once. Glad to meet with a fellow-countryman, he had invited the manikin to visit his house as frequently as the duties of his position would permit, and Joris was not loth to avail himself of this cordiality, especially because the Hollander was at the same time a brewer and often refreshed the traveling stranger with a glass of beer, or, if

need be, lodged him over-night. The Hollander, on his part, took much delight in the society of the assistant jailer, for the latter was an intelligent little man, a keen observer and a ready talker, who had seen and heard much and to some purpose. Gradually a close intimacy sprang up between the two, which was cemented as they communicated to each other more and more of their private history or sentiments. As a consequence, Joris was not long in becoming acquainted with the prosperous farmer's secret views, nor was the latter left in ignorance of the fact that Joris was much in favor of the Reformed faith, and would no doubt have become a zealous Protestant if his wife had not carried things too far by her imprudence.

Matters were at this stage between these two friends when on the afternoon of a dark and dreary day Joris was seated in the house of the Hollander and the door of the public-room was opened and three men entered. These men had the appearance of being traveling merchants, and from their conversation over a can of beer it was soon learned that they were dealers in glass and were on their way to Courtray. Joris, whose duty called him to the prison before the evening, had risen and was on the point of taking leave of the Hollander, when he seemed suddenly attracted by the looks of one of the three merchants and with difficulty refrained from an exclamation of surprise. But the mer-

chant himself seemed to have recognized Joris, for on giving him his hand he whispered,

“Do not call me by name.”

“As you please,” answered Joris, also in a whisper; “but if you can trust the men who came in with you, I can tell you that you are among friends here.”

The two now stepped into an adjoining apartment, when the supposed merchant made himself known as Walter Harmsen, who, accompanied by John Paedts and Dirk Broeks, had come to rescue Antoine Moreau if such a thing were possible.

Joris was deeply moved to learn that the prisoner of the Inquisition was his former foster-son. If the name of the unfortunate victim had been known to him, he would have been aware of this at once; but the Inquisition was not in the habit of recording names upon the prison-books, and to Joris the present victim, like others before him, was known by no other designation than “the heretic.” The youth of eighteen at his best would not have recalled to Ruikmans the boy of nine, but, reduced by grief and torture, Joris had altogether failed to identify him, and, while Antoine was fully aware of the identity of the assistant jailer, obvious reasons stood in the way of his making himself known. Walter Harmsen further informed the manikin that after numberless perils he had succeeded in ascertaining the prison where his friend was con-

fined, and he had thanked the Lord that it was the one where he knew Joris was employed, convinced as he was that he could depend upon the latter's co-operation in the attempts at rescue.

The little man was profuse in his offers of assistance, now that he knew who the prisoner was, but did not disguise the extreme difficulty of rescuing Antoine. Walter Harmsen at first hesitated to permit Joris to do more than give important information as to certain items, fearing that his active co-operation inside the prison-walls might not be strictly honorable; but Joris declared that in the case of such despicable and treacherous dealings on the part of the Jesuits it was his duty to stand by the right at every risk, and the more so as he still felt a parent's interest in the welfare of the persecuted youth.

As Walter Harmsen did not, of course, for a moment question Joris's word, and hence felt he could trust the Hollander, he saw no objection to accepting the request of the brewer for him to stop a few days at his house. But Walter Harmsen could not remain unrecognized by the latter. Although it was perhaps twenty years since they had met, nevertheless, when the lamps had been brought into the room and the light fell upon Harmsen's features, the brewer stepped up to him and made himself known as a man who had been brought to the knowledge of the gospel by him.

It may be conceived how glad a discovery this was to our friend. Several questions and answers were hurriedly exchanged. Walter, who now felt that the Hollander could indeed be trusted, informed him also of his plans. Among other things, he announced that his bosom-friend, the whilom officer in the service of the States, Major Dirk Gapertz, was on the way hither, accompanied by several disguised soldiers, who would support the movement they had in mind should the Inquisition call out their military. The Hollander counseled great caution, as the Inquisition had its spies everywhere, and thus that it would be better to withdraw once in a while from the neighborhood and to assemble mostly during the night to avoid suspicion. Walter assured the farmer that to counteract the keen espionage of the Inquisition or the Jesuits, and to be warned of their movements in time, he had come with three members of the secret service of the sheriff of Leyden.

As Joris could not possibly remain any longer, Walter accompanied him some distance upon the road, arranging some matters with him, and besought him not to let his eagerness to help the youth he so loved as a boy overcome his prudence or his judgment, lest suspicion might be awakened and all their schemes come to miserable failure.

The friends of Antoine Moreau now rapidly matured their plans. It was resolved to remain at

Leers for some time, and, after introducing means of deliverance into the prisoner's cell and intimating their presence, to repair by night to a piece of woods opposite the prison and attempt to establish direct communication with Antoine from the outside. We have seen how well they succeeded in these undertakings, until they came to a sudden stop.

It had come to the knowledge of the Inquisition that some suspicious persons were in hiding in the vicinity of Leers. Although nothing was as yet known of their precise intentions, it was nevertheless surmised that these traveling merchants had something more in mind than selling glass. First, it was proposed by some to leave it to the government to investigate the matter, but at the suggestion of Philip Derot and some others it was determined to watch the movements of these parties. This resolution fortunately came to the ears of Joris, who conveyed the information as speedily as he could to the Hollander, who in turn put Walter Harmsen and his friends on their guard. The farmer advised an immediate retreat and an absence for some time, while Joris should see to making Antoine as comfortable as he could.

However willing our manikin was to take that charge upon his shoulders, it was equally impossible to convey either information or much-needed nourishment to Antoine. Even the limited oppor-

tunity that had formerly been his was now completely cut off, for the Jesuits chose to consider it remotely possible that the prisoner stood in some relation to the suspected parties, and took advantage of this pretext to watch his cell more closely than ever. First of all, a thorough search was again made of the cell, but fortunately nothing was discovered, for, as the prisoner could not even reach the wall in which the aperture was built, there was made no close inspection of the cross-bars, and not the remotest idea occurred to his enemies that the Holy Virgin could be the depository of the articles smuggled into her presence during the night. But the authorities were not content to abide by this. One of the members of the inquisitorial court took it upon himself to accompany the jailer four times every day upon his visits to the prisoner's cell, in order personally to assure himself that all was safe, and that the prisoner received no more bread and water than was allowed him. This was a grievous disappointment to Joris, for now day after day went by without his being enabled even to come near the youth's cell.

In the mean time, Antoine was suffering severely from the want of food. Not only was he tormented by uncertainties and fears with regard to his friends, but hunger distressed him night and day. The last morsel of bread was devoured, and yet it would be three whole days before the next supply

came. His situation was frightful. He called constantly upon God, who had in days past fed his own by means of ravens, but it seemed as if his prayers were not to be answered, for the day went by and no bread. Nevertheless, Antoine doubted not but that help would soon come. Night came, yet he could not sleep; the pangs of hunger raged with increasing violence. Again he threw himself upon his knees, and with his face turned to the opening, from whence he had removed the grating, he prayed the Lord not to abandon him. Suddenly he heard a sound; it was the same for which he had longed during several days, and to which he had grown so accustomed. An object struck the wall and fell into the water. After an interval the sound was repeated—twice, three, four times. Could it be that a less skillful hand was trying the experiment? Meantime, Antoine prayed for its success—the more fervently, the more its failure seemed assured—until, lo! something tumbled through the aperture and fell on the floor by his side. “Amen!” said the youth, rising from his knees and taking the bundle in his hands. As usual, a cord was attached. Antoine drew the cord into the cell, and, looking into the package, discovered to his joy a loaf of rye-bread and a note. The latter must be laid aside till the morrow; the bread was partaken of with devout gratitude. It probably saved him from immediate

starvation. He enjoyed sleep during the remainder of the night, and at the break of day read the following:

“MY DEAR ANTOINE: It is God’s will that you should for some time yet endure the trial of imprisonment, but ere long we hope to be able to announce the hour when you will be delivered. Preserve all the cordage that you have received from time to time; it will be of use. I was not able to sleep on your account the night before; it seemed to me as if you were suffering from hunger, and I resolved, in spite of the objections of my friends, who are now far from here, to take advantage of the dark night to come to this spot and to try and throw you this loaf. May the Lord grant me success! for the opening is very hard to make, on account of the darkness.”

Antoine kissed the paper again and again; there was no other way to manifest his gratitude to his friend and brother. Tears sprang into his eyes as he thought of Walter Harmsen’s grief and his exertions to save him. He resolved to be sparing in the use of the bread which had come to him as it were from Heaven. One hope now possessed him—that his life might be extended at least so long as to enable him to meet and thank and bless that dearest friend upon earth.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE JESUIT AGAIN IN USE.

PHILIP DEROT and Father Benedictus, meanwhile, were not quite at their ease. They were greatly disappointed when they learned that the suspicious strangers had left Leers, and they were convinced that a traitor must have warned them of the intentions of the Jesuits. They were consoling themselves with the idea that these strangers were harmless, after all, and they wished to forget the whole affair, when from another source information reached them that the so-called Hollander leaned to Protestant sentiments, and that for this reason his house had been made the rendezvous of the suspected parties, who had by no means as yet left these regions.

Accordingly, the officials of the Inquisition determined to be more watchful than ever. Florentius Digo was again chosen to be their spy, and was commissioned to investigate what was going on at Leers. His mission, however, was to be kept a profound secret; so that no one might get the remotest intimation of it, lest the parties in question

should again have an opportunity to withdraw from the scene. This last especially the Inquisition wished to prevent. They cherished the hope that by a well-directed blow they might gain possession of the persons of all those who had assembled at a heretic gathering at the house of the Hollander.

No one was better fitted to carry out these designs than Florentius Digo. He laid aside his clerical robes, put on the dress of a miller, and through the secret influence of the superior obtained employment in a mill which stood in the neighborhood of Leers. The Jesuit proceeded with his accustomed astuteness. For the first few days he remained quietly at home. His master did not know definitely anything of the plan, but he knew enough to discover that the new mill-hand brought in more money than he earned. Accordingly, the miller let him remain and do what he pleased, and remarked to his wife,

“If I had three men like that, I would sell my mill and go live in the city.”

Florentius had been in the employ of the miller for more than a week without setting his foot out of doors except to go to mass very early in the morning. He seemed to have no eyes except for flour, and his mouth was as tightly shut as that of a bag of grain, but his ears were the more active. The most insignificant rumor which was of no importance to others he caught at with avidity,

without, however, appearing to do so. In the evening he sat before his bowl of milk like one exhausted by the labors of the day, and was eager to retire to bed. No matter on what topic one addressed him, he had nothing to reply—not even when the miller complained that his nephew, who kept an inn in the village, had so few guests since the Hollander had begun to run a brewery—that the Hollander received strange visits from men who had disappeared a while ago and had now returned. All this the mill-hand heard with external indifference.

On a certain evening Florentius informed his master that he must go out that evening, and that if he did not return during the night it might happen that he would be absent some two or three days. It had come to the ears of the Jesuit not only that the suspected persons had returned to the house of the Hollander, but that others were concealed within the abandoned castle. His plan was formed at once. At a little distance from the village several soldiers in the service of the Inquisition were to be held in readiness to await a signal from Florentius and then hasten to his assistance and arrest the whole company.

Clad in his miller's suit, the Jesuit stealthily walked the streets of the village, taking the road to the castle and creeping cautiously along in the darkness. Just as he was on the point of leaving

the cluster of elm trees that surrounded the building, but left a clear space immediately around it, he heard the voices of some persons leaving the castle. He held his breath and listened.

“According to agreement, Dirk Broeks will remain with you, and you must keep yourselves carefully concealed here. As soon as our undertaking has succeeded and we pass by with the wagon do you join us, to protect us against assault. Do you understand?”

“Very well ! very well !” was the reply.

“But would it not be better to fix the hour now ?” asked another voice.

“I would not advise such a course,” replied the first speaker. “We must first consult with our host, and we would also rather have him who is within know everything beforehand. Not to awaken suspicions, I deem it best that you men remain here, while we proceed to—”

More than this Florentius could not hear, but he had heard a great deal, and might well remain satisfied for the present. He allowed the two persons—who had apparently taken leave of a number of others—to pass by the tree behind which he stood, and then followed them at a short distance. He noticed that they went in the direction of the Hollander’s house, and he would gladly have gone to notify the troops of the Inquisition and arrest them ere they should arrive

there had he not perceived that this would but half accomplish his purpose. Evidently, part of these conspirators—for such now they appeared to be—were in one place and part in another. Some plan must be matured by which both the Hollander's house and the castle could be surprised at once and all the inmates captured.

Besides, though Digo had heard enough to suggest a great deal to his mind, he had by no means obtained sufficient information to work upon and make sure of his case. What was the nature of the undertaking of which they spoke, and who was that person of whom it was said that he was *within*? Florentius, accordingly, deemed it expedient to follow these men to the Hollander's house and see what more he could observe or hear there. He was disappointed, however, on arriving there, to find that the parties he had followed had entered by a way he could not see; and when he reached the place, every door and blind was tightly shut. He was compelled, therefore, to wait until the persons who he knew had been admitted should leave again. And this waiting was by no means an agreeable pastime, for a cold north wind howled among the tree-tops and hissed past his ears. But what did this matter to Florentius Digo? He was too true a Jesuit not to be inured to all manner of discomforts and hardships, and, in the spirit of obedience inculcated by his order, he would have

stood there till he froze to death rather than leave his post of duty or allow his purpose to meet with failure. He was not, however, put to a test quite so severe as that. The village-clock struck twelve, one, two, and yet no one had appeared. If Digo had not been sure that he had seen two men enter the house, or had not noticed through cracks or seams in the shutters that there was light inside, he might have thought that he was mistaken in the house and that all was at rest within the brewery. The contrary, however, was too evident, and at times he could hear the sound of a voice. He accordingly remained firm in his resolution to wait and watch.

It was about half-past two o'clock when Florentius thought he heard the sound made by the hoofs of a horse which seemed to be approaching the spot where he stood. He was not deceived, for a few minutes later he saw a man on horseback, accompanied by a man who led the horse by the bridle. Both almost brushed past him, but the darkness concealed him from their observation. Arrived at the house, one alighted from the horse, while the other took the animal to the barn. The latter came back and joined his companion, when they both proceeded to announce themselves at the door. The Jesuit now noticed that the man who had ridden the horse walked lame. The two knocked, giving first one rap, and then seven in

quick succession. Immediately there was a movement within the house.

“Who is there?” asked a voice from within.

“A friend from The Hague.”

The door was speedily opened, and while several exclaimed “Welcome, major!” the rider and his conductor entered the room.

Florentius had looked intently, but could see nothing of the persons inside; now he was again left in darkness and solitude. He muttered to himself, and was more than ever confirmed in the resolution to wait for still further developments.

“I shall wait the entire night through,” he said to himself; “no doubt there will be more birds coming to this heretic nest.”

But while Florentius Digo stands shivering with the cold out-doors and braves the discomfort with grim determination, we shall enter the house, partake of its comfortable cheer and listen to the conversation which beguiled the hours that proved so long and tedious to the Jesuit.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

THE room to which we are introduced is a very spacious one. The state of the weather outside makes it delightful to see the great logs of wood burning lustily upon the wide and deep hearth. The dancing flames leap up to a great height, and their bright blaze renders the lighting of lamps entirely unnecessary.

The occupants of the room have ranged themselves in a semicircle about the hearth and are earnestly engaged in conversation. The Hollander is seated at one corner of the chimney. Near him stands a large wardrobe, against which a musket is leaning; through the partially-opened door a pair of clumsy pistols may also be seen. Next to the Hollander sits our friend Walter Harmsen; two more persons occupy the remaining chairs. It is long past midnight, and yet no thought of parting company seems to disturb them. On the contrary, the host has just brought in a new supply of wood and thrown it upon the glowing coals.

“It remains, then, as we have agreed upon,”

the Hollander remarked, when he had resumed his seat; "for, indeed, we may well say of our project, 'Now or never.' I believe we have a fine chance just at present."

"I am greatly rejoiced, dear friend," said Walter Harmsen, "that you speak in so decided and encouraging a manner. A while ago you were so exceedingly cautious—"

"Oh, I feel differently now," interrupted the Hollander. "I begin to see that prudence, as it is called, may sometimes lead to sin and to one's great spiritual injury; it may be the result of a love of ease and be too gratifying to the flesh."

"Very true, dear friend," answered Walter, "but, avoiding this kind of prudence, we shall exercise the right sort in this business; for the success of our undertaking will largely depend upon that. To-morrow night, when the clock strikes half-past one, Antoine Moreau must begin the dangerous venture; and when he has reached us in safety, we shall place him upon the wagon and hurry to a place of safety under the protection of our band of soldiers, but more especially under the protection of a higher and mightier Power."

"You may well call it a dangerous venture," spoke one of the two whom Florentius had followed from the castle—"perilous both for him and for us. How he is to get through that opening is a

puzzle to me, and how he is to cross the moat is still more perplexing."

"Be of good courage, Mr. Paedts," said Walter to the last speaker; "the affair will succeed with the Lord's help. You know who is to arrange the escape, do you not?"

"No, I cannot say that I really know," answered the other of the later comers, whose name was Dirk Broeks, one of Harmsen's right-hand men at the village of Voorschoten.

"Why, it is none other than Major Gapertz, whom we are expecting every moment. He suggested to me the plan of escape, for as an old soldier he has had practical experience of such matters with prisoners of war; and at the last moment he will be present himself, and will be particularly useful in superintending all the details of the delicate operation."

"Excuse me, Mr. Harmsen," said the Hollander, "for seeming impertinent, but during the last day or two I have heard you speak more than once of a Major Gapertz. Was he not originally of Egmond, in North Holland? and did he rise from a common soldier to his present rank as major?"

"It is the same. Do you know him?" inquired Harmsen.

"I served in his command during the siege of Steenwyk. My duties brought me in close attendance upon his person; in fact, I was quartered with

him in the same place—an old mill outside the walls which was afterward demolished by the artillery of the besieged.”

“Your mention of the old mill,” said Walter Harmsen, “brings to my mind a woman by the name of Aalt; Aalt van Steenwyk she was called when I met her. Did you know any such person?”

“Oh yes, very well,” answered the farmer; “she was employed as housemaid by the family that lived in the mill. The family all fled when the cannon were being directed upon the mill, but she in some way contrived to hide herself in the cellar; and when the siege was over, she emerged unhurt. She had found ample sustenance in the full larder beneath.”

“Then it must have been in this way that she knew of the murder of the little child’s nurse and could become so useful in restoring Antoine to his mother. How the thought of these things brings back the memory of the happy days when that reunion between mother and son was consummated!—Do you remember, Mr. Paedts, what interest and delight the excellent St. Aldegonde took in this event, and how pleased he was that these first days of recovered joys should have been spent at his house?”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Paedts, “and it was not long before the time of his death that these events took

place. How soon afterward did he pass to his rest above?" *

"Scarcely two months," answered Walter. "It was on the fifteenth of December, 1598; I was present when he died. His leavetaking from his relatives was very touching and impressive. His son Jacob followed him to the grave very shortly after."

"And does not Lady Veronica, Baron Jacob's widow, now live at The Hague?" asked Dirk Broeks.

"She does. Lord St. Aldegonde owned a house in Leyden, but after the death of her distinguished father-in-law and her husband, Lady Veronica fixed her residence with her daughter, Walburg, in The Hague. I believe before very long the latter is to wed William of Barneveldt, the son of the advocate of Holland."

"Did you not inform me, Mr. Harmsen," rejoined the bookseller, "that the baroness Walburg van Marnix was a devout Christian? How, then, can she consent to marry William of Barneveldt, who has the reputation of being a wild character?"

"What shall I say?" replied Walter. "I am inclined to believe the marriage is not quite to her mind, but you know that among people of rank matters of that sort are not always arranged as

* "*Répos ailleurs*" was the well-known motto of Marnix St. Aldegonde.

they should be. Her father was very intimate with the advocate from early youth, and they pledged their children to each other while these were still almost babes."

"She too was greatly interested in Antoine Moreau while he was still under ward of the major, was she not?" said Mr. Paedts.

"Yes, and she was partly instrumental in the restoration of mother and child to each other. Her letters to Baroness Jacoba van Vlooswyk were full of little Walburgius, for at baptism her name had been given to the little foundling. Hence, when Lady Jacoba met Madame Moreau in Flanders, it at once struck her that this child and this lady's lost son might be identical, and thus she felt the more encouraged to urge her to accompany her. How strangely," continued Walter, pensively, as if communing with himself, although speaking so as to be heard—"how strangely, while we are here assembled in his cause and are willing to risk so much, have we been led to speak of the persons who were interested in Antoine's boyhood days or were instrumental in restoring him to his mother! Was it not a mysterious providence that he, as a child severed from his parents, exposed to death, should have been saved, carefully nurtured and afterward restored to mother and home? And to what purpose has it been? To grow to young manhood, to be marked by God as one of his

precious ones, to be called upon to witness a good confession in the face of persecution and death. In those early days his life was saved that his soul might be enriched with Christ's great salvation. His life was saved, but it was saved that he might die a hero of the faith. He was saved, but *saved for martyrdom!*"

The deep seriousness of the tone of voice in which these words were spoken, and the wonderful course of God's providence to which they called attention, produced a feeling of awe and reverence which for several minutes hushed all conversation.

"You spoke a few moments ago," said the Hollander, at the end of that time, "of a baroness Jacoba van Vlooswyk: is that the same lady of whom Joris Ruikmans has told me so much? He served in her family, I believe, when he was in Utrecht."

"It is the same," replied Walter; "she has lived for many years in France. But, speaking of Joris, have you heard from him lately?"

"But very little," replied the farmer; "I only know that he was ready to quit the prison-work at any moment."

"Then I must have later information," said Dirk Broeks; "I have learned that he will try and leave it to-morrow night."

"He will find that rather difficult," said the Hollander. "He is under suspicion and is watched,

and has not been able lately to get permission to visit my house."

"Friend Joris is not the man to be easily discouraged, however," said Harmsen; "I would not be surprised to see him among us to-morrow night. He knows of our project?"

"Certainly," replied Dirk Broeks, "and I believe he will try to join us. But hark! what is that?"

The hoofs of a horse stepping upon the hard, gravelly ground of the door-yard were plainly heard.

"That must be the major," said the friends to each other.

We have already seen that it was, to judge by their exclamations. When seated among them, he told how he had ridden direct from Ostende accompanied by well-armed and brave disguised soldiers who if there were need would show the hirelings of the Inquisition that they bore stout Holland hearts about with them.

Florentius Digo encountered nothing further that night; he determined to achieve more the next.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

THE clock of the bishop's prison sounded its twelve deep strokes, and thus announced the hour of midnight. Everything appeared to be plunged in the profoundest repose. Upon the court of the prison the sentry was rapidly walking back and forth, to counteract the influence of the cold, freezing air. In the guard-room a bright fire diffused warmth and cheer, and the soldiers sat or lounged about the hearth, some playing games of chance, while Joris assiduously went the rounds with the wine-can and poured out its contents in generous measure. An hour later the soldiers of the watch experienced the effects of these potations, for several lay unconscious upon the floor and many were not able to walk. Joris, however, managed to abstain, although appearing to join in the bout. He kept an eye upon the bunch of keys in charge of the subaltern officer which would afford means of opening the gates of the courtyard and the wicket of the drawbridge. An hour after midnight on the other side of the moat Joris was walking away from the prison.

Meanwhile, Antoine Moreau was seated upon the stone bench in his cell. Sleep was out of the question. His eyes were uninterruptedly fixed upon the opening in the wall opposite, from which the bars had been removed. Only an occasional star was visible in the heavens, and no other sound was heard than the rushing of the winter wind. The prisoner had no certainty that he would receive any communication from his friends, and yet something within him seemed to warrant the presentiment of speedy release. He prayed that he might not be disappointed in this expectation, and that he might be granted the needed strength to second the efforts of his friends if they should attempt to rescue him this night; for he was very weak and reduced almost to a skeleton by starvation. He was so thin that when the time approached for the jailer's visit he could easily slip the chain over his wrist without opening the clasp as before; he was so feeble that it cost him the greatest exertion to remove the image of the Virgin whenever required. He had laid himself down upon his straw for a few hours during the earlier part of the night, but no sleep had visited his eyelids. Hunger and thirst, cold and pain, had driven him from his bed of straw. He had run about to and fro like a hunted deer to restore warmth to his chilled frame, and finally he had seated himself upon the bench, in the hope that the Lord would send speedy relief.

The prison clock strikes one. The next instant Antoine hears the familiar sound against the outer wall. He rises and approaches the aperture. Again the wall is struck, and the object falls into the water. He lifts his eyes devoutly to heaven in a silent prayer for help, and a few moments later something drops upon the middle of the floor. He stoops to pick it up, and discovers it to be a bundle with a stout rope attached. He pulls at the rope, as he was accustomed to do with the others, but finds he can draw only part of it toward him, for it seems to be held or secured at the other end. This puzzles him. He accordingly opens the bundle, expecting to receive hereby an explanation of this novel course on the part of his friends. As he removes the covers a small piece of candle and materials for striking a light lie before him, and, a piece of paper covered with writing catching his eye at the same time, he at once comprehends the design of his friends. He lights the candle and reads as follows :

“Fasten the rope-ladder to the stoutest portion of the rope just now thrown to you ; secure the ladder to some object in your cell. The other end of the rope is in our hands. Climb up to the opening by means of the ladder, and force yourself through. Next slide along the rope across the water to the opposite shore, where you will find friends waiting to receive you. The Lord be with

you! Make all possible haste. Everything is in readiness on our part."

"O God," sighed Antoine, "be thou indeed with me! If it be thy will that I safely reach my friends, I shall thank thee fervently. If thou deem it necessary to my welfare and the glory of thy name that my enemies triumph over me, give me a humble and submissive heart to resign myself to all that thou hast determined to do with me."

The prisoner now addressed himself to the task before him. He was on the point of fastening the rope-ladder around the firm base of the stone bench, when the thought struck him that even should he succeed in passing through the aperture he would nevertheless be too weak to let himself down the rope hand over hand to the other side; he determined, therefore, to make use of the pieces of rope collected within the body of the holy image. He took them thence, and after doubling and tying them together he found he had enough to go around his body and to form a loop, through which he slipped the rope-ladder and the rope that was to aid his descent; thus, in case his strength gave out, he could rest himself by bearing his weight on this girdle of cord around his body, which was quite sufficient to hold him. He now fastened the rope-ladder to the bench and by its means climbed up with considerable ease to the opening in the wall,

but here met the first difficulty of his venture. The aperture but just affords room for his head to pass easily through ; his shoulders seem to form an insurmountable obstruction to his passage. On account of the severity of the night he had wrapped himself in his mantle, but it is out of the question for him to retain this comfortable covering : it must be cast aside. When divested of this, he succeeds, by much twisting and turning, in getting his shoulders outside. But now he perceives that it would have been better if he had removed his inner garment too. Yet what is to be done ? In the position in which he now is he can neither retreat nor go on ; he therefore for a few moments ceases to struggle, and prays earnestly for further help. Then, with strength somewhat refreshed, he addresses himself once more to the desperate attempt. He braces his feet and knees against the sides of the opening ; he twists and turns and struggles with the energy of despair. He moves ; the obstacle of the garment gives away. A few more jerks of the whole body, and, God be praised ! he is clear of the opening. He clutches the rope with both hands and lets himself down with great carefulness, but, as he had supposed, he cannot very long sustain even his slight weight ; he is compelled to rest one of his arms at a time, and finds the loop of great assistance for such a purpose. Ere long he reaches a point where he sees that he is

suspended over about the middle of the moat. A sudden fear now paralyzes his highly-wrought nerves, weakened by bodily suffering. Can he ever reach the other side? Beneath, the depth affrights him; above, he sees nothing but the sky. He perceives no sign of his friends, although by the shaking of the rope at the lower end he knows that some are expecting him. Notwithstanding that it is very cold, a profuse perspiration breaks out over all his frame. He feels he is in a situation of great peril, and that feeling of dread overpowers every other.

And surely the situation of Antoine was a critical one. In spite of the efforts of his friends to prevent it, the fierce wintry blast swung the rope with its light burden to and fro, and seemed to be endeavoring to shake him off like a leaf from its stem. Holding on for dear life with both hands, the poor youth could hardly have prevented this had he not thought of the precaution of the loop. Yet even the latter gave him much trouble, for the rope was not in one continuous piece, but had been made up of several pieces tied in great knots together, and every knot was an obstruction which could be overcome only with difficulty. The swinging of the rope, too, was beginning to make Antoine sick and dizzy, and only with the most determined self-restraint could he keep himself from losing consciousness. This, however, could not

last long. His strength was nearly exhausted; the next obstacle the loop encounters deprives him of what remains. The powerless hands refuse their hold upon the rope; uttering a cry of terror, he sinks back, and hangs only by the loop. He becomes senseless. He glides along a little farther until the next knot is reached, and then remains stationary, suspended between heaven and earth.

At the same instant a pistol-shot rings out upon the night-air, followed by a second, a third; the rolling of a drum is heard. Antoine is oblivious to all this, unconscious of the dangers that are thickening all around him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE JESUIT ASSAULTED.

UPON the evening of the same day, preceding the occurrences related in the previous chapter, Florentius Digo, wrapped in a dark-brown cloak, left the mill and penetrated the forest that stretched from the vicinity of the castle of Leers until far in the direction of Tournay. Here, at an appointed place, he encountered a number of soldiers with their officer. After giving them the necessary directions and having convinced himself of their readiness to carry out the desires of the Inquisition, he took the road to the north, and after proceeding about a mile met another division of the soldiers of the Inquisition, back of the Hollander's house. The Jesuit informed the officer that he intended to conceal himself near the house, and appointed for the signal at which he was to come to his aid a pistol-shot repeated twice in quick succession.

The officer objected to Digo's trusting himself singly in the vicinity, perhaps in the very midst, of his enemies. The remonstrance was answered with a smile by the fearless Jesuit, and, drawing a brace

of pistols from beneath his cloak, he showed them to the officer, adding that he trusted to the assistance of the Virgin Mary. He urged the officer, also, to place sentries in several places through the forest, charging them not to allow any one from Tournay to pass without giving the watchword.

At about half-past eleven on the same night two persons were approaching the village of Leers from the direction of the city of Courtray. One of these seemed to be wholly unacquainted with these parts and depended for guidance upon the other, who assured him that in former years he had so frequently gone over the road between Courtray and Tournay that he could trust himself to find the way on a night even much darker than the present. When near Leers, one of them said,

“I twust, Mr. Melchiow, that we shall soon come upon a good inn, for as twuly as my name is Willebwowdus Gwoothuwwelbwink I am as cold as ice. Methinks a glass of hot spiced beew would do us good. Do you know of any inn neaw here?”

“I think I do,” was the reply. “If the one in Leers that I used to stop at is still in existence, we shall soon be there.”

“That is good,” said the first speaker, “for I am as tired as an overworked horse. But, according to what you said, we cannot be far from the end of our journey. I wonder if we will meet that

arch-deceiver to-morrow? If we can only find out where he keeps himself at this time! If we find him, the Courtray doctow will know that he has got me to deal with."

"I wish nothing better," said the whilom apothecary, "than to catch the rascal. I have made a vow that I will not cut my hair in ten years if I can have my revenge for his treatment of me."

Melchior's fellow-traveler laughed inaudibly, and thought, "The old miser will not devote even a small candle to the Virgin, but vows what will not cost him any money, and cannot give him much trouble, either, with his bald pate."

"You stick to our agreement," continued Melchior, "to surprise Florentius Digo and force him to pay us what he owes, or else give him such a thrashing as he will not soon forget?"

"Certainly. We must surprise him," assented Brordus. "I will make him pay me for the month or two that I went every morning upon the road to Voorschoten for him, and he will have to pay us, too, for all the trouble we have had in getting here. But they told us in Courtray that we would find this doctow in Tournay. How far is Leers from Tournay?"

"If I remember right, about six or seven miles. After passing the village we enter a forest, which reaches nearly to the city; then we cross a stream which surrounds the place. If once we get in the

town, we will soon obtain all the information we want, for I have several relatives and friends living there. But here we are at the village. Now for the inn and a little rest."

When Brordus and Melchior had partaken of the cheer which they had promised themselves, they left the inn and proceeded on their way to Tournay. As Melchior had said, on leaving the village the road entered the forest. It was very dark here, and Brordus would have preferred to return to the inn if Melchior had not assured him that he knew every inch of the way and could see in the dark almost as well as by daylight. Accordingly, the curious pair held on their course, although not without coming into occasional contact with trees whose limbs hung too low or whose trunks were near the edge of the road. Melchior calculated that it must be about half-past one, and that they would reach Tournay about three.

Suddenly, at a point where the road made a sharp turn, the travelers were confronted by a man wrapped in a dark cloak.

"Who are you," inquired he, "and what is the watchword?"

Melchior staggered back a few paces on hearing this man's voice. Brordus also was greatly startled, but, soon recovering his presence of mind, he remarked lightly,

"Here we actually have our Courtway doctow !

Well, now ! this is weally strange.—Did you know we were looking for you ? Then you surely must be weady to pay me for my walks to Voorschoten.”

“And to pay me the twenty-five florins out of which you cheated me so shamelessly,” added Melchior, whose fury in the presence of his enemy knew no bounds as he remembered the treatment he had received at his hands on the night of his departure.

“I do not know you,” said Florentius Digo, without a moment’s hesitation.

“Well, now, this is a pretty thing to tell us !” said Brordus. “Have you forgotten that my name is Willebwowdus Gwoothuwwelbwink ? that I used to brush your shoes and clothes ? that for months I went up the road to Voorschoten for you ? that I—”

“And that you cheated me out of twenty-five florins,” interrupted Melchior, “and bound me so shamefully and left me lying out-doors ? Do you still dare to persist in saying that you do not know us ?”

“You are mistaken in my person,” said Florentius, coolly, taking a step or two backward. “It is possible that my voice resembles that of the man you have in mind, but I do not remember ever having met you before.”

“No, you treacherous reptile !” rejoined Melchior, furiously ; “you shall not succeed in throw-

ing us off the scent by your bold denials. If you do not recognize myself and your former servant, *we* have no trouble in recognizing *you*. Say!" he continued, approaching him and pulling him by the cloak; "do you not know me—me, Melchior van Walle?"

Digo made no answer. He had placed his right hand under his cloak and was drumming upon one of the pistols in his belt.

Melchior, whose wrath increased the longer Florentius kept silent, shook the Jesuit by the shoulder and hissed into his ear:

"Dare you any longer deny that you are Florentius Digo? or are you afraid, now that you feel yourself helpless against the two of us?"

No answer.

"I request you kindly," said Brordus, who kept cool while his companion became more and more excited, "to draw your purse and give us what is rightly ours. If you do that, you may call yourself what you like and we will return home at once."

"I am not in the habit of granting the requests of highwaymen," said Florentius, as unmoved as ever.

"What! 'highwaymen'?" cried Brordus. "Do you call us names as well as cheat us out of our money? I will teach you better than that?" and, pushing Melchior aside, he was about to throw him-

self upon the Jesuit, when the latter drew his pistol and said in a tone of command,

“Back, villains, or I will shoot you dead!”

“I will prevent that!” cried Brordus, who threw himself upon the ground and with a movement quick as thought caught the Jesuit’s legs from beneath him and hurled him upon his back. “Catch the rascal by the throat, Mr. Melchior,” shouted the weaver.

The whilom apothecary was not slow to follow this advice, but suddenly started back, as the Jesuit fired the pistol in falling.

“He has hit me,” cried Melchior, grasping his arm.

“So much the more right have you to revenge yourself,” said Brordus, who lay with his whole length upon the Jesuit and held one of his hands. “Hold the fellow or he will jump up again.”

“He shall not escape us,” cried Melchior; and, forgetting his wound, he also threw himself upon Florentius, as he perceived that he let fall one pistol to grasp the other.

At this moment another shot was fired in the vicinity.

“Ha! you are in my power!” exclaimed the Jesuit, who made desperate efforts to shake off his assailants. “That shot announces the approach of my defenders.—Help! help! Here I am! Here!”

Melchior and Brordus listened a moment. A

musket-shot was heard, but from an entirely different direction.

"Help ! help !" screamed Florentius Digo.

"Wait, villain !" said Melchior, whose arm began to give him pain, and whose thirst for vengeance was rather whetted than satisfied by events thus far—"wait ! I will teach you to keep quiet ;" and he struck the Jesuit in the face with both fists and with all his might, while Brordus compressed his throat.

Melchior, however, thought even this punishment too slight a return for the injury done to him ; he was like a tiger that grows more ferocious the more blood he scents. He forced the pistol from the hand of the Jesuit and struck him one or two blows across the forehead. Florentius soon abandoned all efforts to defend himself, and his blood-stained head sank unconscious upon the sand.

Like two famished wolves the confederates fell upon their prey and dragged him to some distance from the public road, hoping there to rob him of whatever money he might have about his person. This purpose, however, they were prevented from accomplishing. To their consternation, confused voices were heard close by and in every direction.

"This way !" cried one who seemed to exercise command over the others. "This way, men ! From this direction the pistol-shot was heard."

"With your permission, captain," said another,

“the two shots came from different directions, and we were told not to move till two shots were fired in quick succession. But hark ! There is another shot, and near the city. And again another !”

“Forward, men !” commanded the officer. “Forces seem to be marching upon the piece of woods back of the prison from the other side of the river also ; I believe, therefore, that our presence is needed, signal or no signal.”

The soldiers seemed to be approaching the road from the other side, and would pass near where Brordus and Melchior lay hid with their victim. The roll of a drum was heard in the distance.

“Forward !” was again commanded by the officer. “We will encounter the superior of the Inquisition somewhere.”

Melchior and Brordus had no time to lose. As stealthily as they could they crept through the leafless underbrush, and were soon at a safe distance from the line of march of the soldiers. The latter proceeded on their advance, which was necessarily slow, on account of the excessive darkness.

Suddenly a halt was called.

“What does this mean ?” inquired the officer.

“Here lies a man upon the ground.”

“Some man, perhaps, who has lost his way and has fallen asleep.”

“No ; he is groaning, and I feel blood flowing down his forehead.”

The officer approached the spot.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Florentius Digo," groaned the wounded man.

On hearing this reply the officer was greatly startled, and commanded a few of the soldiers to carry the Jesuit to the city. Having made a rude litter of the branches, the soldiers placed the Jesuit upon it, and then the whole band moved on and reached the edge of the forest about the time that Antoine uttered his cry and sank back, to hang senseless from the loop.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ANTOINE REACHES HIS FRIENDS.

IN the little piece of woods opposite the bishop's prison there were a number of persons. It was at a distance of about two miles from the forest in which took place the occurrences narrated in the preceding chapter. A small band of soldiers encircled it on the outskirts; they had come to these parts by twos and threes, and were now under the command of Major Gapertz. A few men stood beside a wagon to which was attached a powerful horse. A profound silence was observed by all, and, except for an occasional whisper, nothing was heard but the howling of the wind.

At the edge of this wood, on the bank of the stream which here formed part of the prison-moat, and almost directly opposite the cell of Antoine Moreau, stood a large old tree around whose trunk was wound a stout rope. Not until the eye had become somewhat accustomed to the darkness could it be perceived that this rope was connected with the air-hole of the cell, but it could readily be seen that collected about the tree were a few persons who

from time to time kept tightening the rope. These persons were Walter Harmsen, Dirk Broeks, John Paedts, the Hollander and two of his men.

"I feel a motion," whispered Walter Harmsen, who kept one hand on the rope. "He must have secured the rope-ladder, and is now climbing up to the opening. Do you see anything of him yet?"

"Not yet," was the reply, also in whispers. "But yes! now I think I see him putting his head outside. It must be hard for him to get through."

All eyes turned to the aperture, and every hand was laid upon the rope to increase its tension, so as to make the descent easier.

"See! he is partly through, but something checks him. Can he have been detected?" exclaimed Mr. Paedts.

"Hush! softly!" whispered the Hollander. "If you love our lives and the life of the fugitive, you must not speak aloud."

"Pardon me," said Paedts; "but the fear that even in the last moment our endeavors might be frustrated made me forget all prudence."

For a few moments all held their breath, seeing that Antoine made no movement and fearing that Paedts's apprehension might be a true one. But soon their fears were relieved, when, after a few more struggles, Antoine was seen to clear the wall and to be suspended from the rope. The shaking of the rope indicated that the youth was gliding

toward them, and by the advice of Walter Harm-sen the wagon was directed to come nearer.

Suddenly a cry was heard. Hastening to the water's edge, Antoine Moreau was seen hanging with head and arms and legs dangling over the stream. At first the rescuers did not comprehend how he could remain in this position, but the Hollander surmised at once that he was held by a loop around the rope. While they were consulting what was best to be done and were overwhelmed with anxiety for the fate of their beloved friend, they were surprised by the arrival of Joris Ruikmans. The manikin was carrying a flask of wine, which he thought might come in good stead to quicken Antoine, as it had before done good service in putting the guard to sleep. In few words he informed them that he had left the prison for good and all. He was soon told of the existing state of affairs.

"I know what is to be done," he said. "Draw the rope as taut as you can. There must be a loop holding him up in that way, and it has been stopped by one of the knots; I will go and see if I can lift him over it."

In spite of the darkness the little man climbed up to the spot where Antoine hung suspended. A few minutes later Joris returned and informed the anxious friends that Antoine was unconscious, that he hung by a loop, as they had supposed, and that

he had in vain tried to lift it over the knot that kept him from sliding down. But one of two things remained to be done—either to unwind the rope from the tree, let Antoine fall into the water and then swim to his rescue, or else to shake the rope violently up and down, in the hope that the loop would slip over the knot and allow Antoine to slide down to the end. The latter method was decided upon. Dirk Broeks and the Hollander, with his two farm-hands, shook the rope with all their might, while Mr. Paedts and Walter knelt down and prayed for deliverance and help in this almost hopeless situation. But their extremity was to become still greater.

At this instant our friends heard the pistol-shot fired by Florentius Digo, followed by a second and a third. The three men of the sheriff of Leyden's secret service came running in breathless haste with the tidings that a large band of soldiers of the Inquisition was on the march. In the same moment approached the covered wagon, attended by the detachment of Dutch soldiers, at whose head rode Major Gapertz. The rolling of the drum announced the nearness of the Inquisition forces. Fear and anxiety seized upon our friends.

Walter Harmsen alone retained his self-possession.

“The Lord will be with us,” he reminded them ;
“his will be done.”

"Shake the rope," cried Joris. "I feel that Antoine is gliding toward us."

A few more vigorous shakes, and slowly the senseless frame of the youth glided down. He was soon within reach, and all hastened to receive him. To cut the rope and to catch the fugitive in their arms were the work of but a moment. They were carrying him to the wagon, when the woods rang with the cry :

"For the Holy Inquisition and the Mother of God !"

"For Holland and the cause of the Lord !" answered the clarion voice of Major Gapertz, leading his men in a sudden charge upon the approaching band of Inquisition troops, who were provided with torches and lamps suspended from sticks. These were, however, greatly to the disadvantage of those who bore them, as they were thus exposed to the view of the Hollanders, whose position and numbers could not be well determined by the enemy. Again arose the battle-cries on either side, and a fierce conflict began to rage.

Meantime, Walter Harmsen and his friends had succeeded in bearing Antoine to the wagon, where he was made as comfortable as circumstances allowed. Though still senseless, it had been noticed that he was alive. Joris poured some wine into his mouth and Walter wrapped him in a thick cloak ; then the farm-hands were charged to urge

the horse to a gallop and by roundabout roads to drive across the borders into France. But this was not to be accomplished so easily. The bullets flew in every direction, and it did not seem unlikely that they were encompassed on all sides and would have to yield to superior numbers.

The forces of the enemy were really much greater than those under the command of Major Gapertz ; had it not been that the latter depended upon the assistance of Providence, he would have deemed it madness to engage in so unequal a conflict. Besides, the uncertainty as to his forces, caused by the darkness and the difficulty of manœuvring a large body of men in the woods, gave him advantages that were considerable and largely counteracted the difference in numbers. Still, the major and his men were in a critical position. It was plainly evident that the enemy's plan was to drive them all to one point, and then to make them prisoners. How should they prevent this design from being carried out? It could not be ascertained at what point the forces of the enemy were weakest ; nevertheless, Major Gapertz resolved to cut a way to the road to Courtray, in order to allow the fugitive to escape in that direction. The whole struggle on the side of the Hollanders was for the sake of saving Antoine Moreau, while the Inquisition, knowing nothing as yet of the flight of its victim, had no other object than to get into its power all

the adherents of the Reformation who had here been congregating.

Still the battle raged. Many a Fleming was struck down by the vigorous arm of a Holland soldier, but occasionally a Hollander fell. Dirk Gapertz, seated upon his horse, fought like a lion. Wherever he came he swung his long sword and dealt death to all within its reach. But nevertheless no way could be cut through the ranks of the enemy for the passage of the wagon, which was still under the guidance of the farm-hands and surrounded by our friends. The enemy closed in upon the forces on their side with such numbers that the way to Courtray seemed hopelessly cut off, and thus nothing remained but to try another direction. Like a tiger robbed of its prey the major hurled his determined little band upon another point, and a passage was actually made; he called to the friends to follow with the wagon. But, alas! ere the latter could comply a fresh supply of troops came, and compelled the major to make a desperate fight to secure his retreat.

In this critical moment the Hollander, his men, Walter Harmsen, Mr. Paedts and Joris Ruikmans saw no other means of escape than by withdrawing to the side of the stream, in the hope of making unobserved a circuit around the enemy, and succeeded in reaching the water's edge, and then proceeded rapidly in the direction of Tournay.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST.

THE wagon, with its precious load, had just entered the forest which begins near the city of Tournay and stretches to Leers, and our friends were congratulating themselves upon being safe at last, when they encountered a score of Flemish soldiers with lighted torches. No sooner did these come within view of the others than the cry was raised, "A wagon! a wagon!"

Joris Ruikmans heard this cry with consternation, and hastily whispered to his companions:

"Yonder comes the superior, Philip Derot; I know him by his voice."

"A wagon! a wagon!" was repeated on the side of the enemy. "Detain it! We will place our worthy Florentius Digo in it, and will thus convey him more speedily to the city."

Immediately do the Flemish soldiers press toward the wagon. Behind them are seen a number of men who, accompanied by torch-bearers and the chief of the Jesuits, are carrying Florentius Digo upon a litter made of branches.

The Holland soldiers who are escorting the wagon come to a stand-still. The two servants of the Hollander hold the horse under control, while the friends of Antoine surround the wagon, determined to risk all in its defence. The Flemings now observe that the wagon is in possession of their enemies, and that an obstinate defence will be made, although they do not suspect what are its real contents.

“For the Inquisition and the Holy Mother of God!” is the cry under which the Flemings advance to the attack.

The Hollanders do not reply by calling out their battle-cry, but, leveling their muskets, at once pour a deadly fire into their opponents’ ranks; so that many a soldier of the Inquisition instantly falls dead.

“Upon them! upon them!” cries the same voice which had filled Joris with dread. “Upon them! Every one who kills a heretic receives absolution from all his sins, and ten florins besides!”

We will not determine here which recompense of the two nerved the arms of the Flemings; at any rate, they pressed with sword and pike upon the devoted defenders of the wagon, and forced them to yield to superior numbers.

At this instant Walter Harmsen and the Hollander spring upon the wagon.

“Save our friend! Save Antoine Moreau!” cries

Mr. Paedts, who assists in holding the frightened horse.

“ ‘Antoine Moreau’ !” exclaims Philip Derot, who comes up in the rear of the soldiers. “Is Antoine Moreau in the wagon?—Kill, kill ! Twenty florins to him who brings him to me !”

Scarcely has Derot thus spoken, when a cannon-shot comes booming from the direction of the bishop’s prison : it is the signal that a prisoner has escaped. Now Philip Derot is convinced that what he has heard is a fact ; and when a second and a third time a cannon is fired at the prison, he becomes more urgent in his offers of reward to those who will deliver Antoine Moreau, alive or dead, into his hands.

Meanwhile, the Hollander has come to the side of the fugitive. He wishes to rouse him and aid him to escape from the wagon, but the unhappy youth is not able to lift himself up ; previous exhaustion from long starvation and the terrible experiences of the last few hours have left but a spark of life within him. The farmer is thus compelled to lift him bodily in his arms. The weight is nothing to his sturdy strength, yet he needs Walter’s aid to reach the ground. With the precious burden in his arms he hurries away from the *mêlée* into the darkness of the forest, but he has gone but a few steps when a bullet strikes him and he falls to the earth. Walter Harmsen seeks

to aid him, but it is too late: the Hollander has been taken away in the midst of his labor of love. Greatly as this grieves Walter Harmsen, he cannot now abandon himself to regrets. With difficulty does he disengage Antoine from the embrace of the dead man, lift him into his own arms and pursue his way into the forest, followed by Joris Ruikmans and a few of the soldiers to cover his retreat. A shower of bullets is sent after them; one of them strikes the manikin, passes through his body and pierces his heart. He too has given his life to preserve that of his foster-child. He is content that it should be thus; he fears not to die. As he falls his last words are,

“Lord, remember me when—”

Walter Harmsen has succeeded in penetrating into the obscurity of the forest, and is completely hid from sight and protected by some thick oak trees against danger from stray bullets. The wagon has been taken by the Flemish soldiers, and the Holland soldiers, with Mr. Paedts, Dirk Broeks and the others, have made good their escape in another direction. Philip Derot and Father Benedictus expect to find Antoine Moreau in the wagon, but of course are disappointed. They now command that the wounded Florentius be comfortably disposed within it, and charge some of the soldiers to conduct it to the city. But the wagon has not gone far when it is stopped by the advancing bands

of conflicting friends and enemies. Major Gapertz has finally succeeded in forcing a passage through the troops that surround the woods back of the prison, and the scene of battle is now shifted to the forest, where he can fight at still greater advantage.

“For Holland and the cause of the Lord!” shouts the major, collecting his men around him and falling with redoubled fury upon the enemy. Wherever he dashes with his spirited charger everything scatters before him; he is like Gideon fighting the Midianites.

The Holland soldiers, fired by the example of their commander, exhibit a courage and a strength such as astonish the Flemings to the utmost. It seems to them that the Hollanders must have been reinforced by tenfold their former numbers. Animated by no such high motives to courage and perseverance as are the others, they yield to the consternation which such a thought is calculated to produce, and a panic is soon communicated from rank to rank. Suddenly a voice exclaims: “Flee! flee! The devil in person fights on their side!” and now the hirelings of the Inquisition run in every direction, throwing away muskets, swords, pikes and whatever else can hinder them in their flight. Major Gapertz pursues them to the edge of the forest and makes sure that it is thoroughly cleared of the enemy. Philip Derot and Father

Benedictus have long ago left the wagon behind them, barely escaping from the hot conflict with their lives. The Hollander's farm-hands recover their master's property in triumph, imagining that the wounded person within the wagon is Antoine Moreau.

"Victory! victory!" resounds through the forest.

Major Gapertz joins in the cry of his men, but his thoughts go up to God in thanksgiving and his eyes look everywhere for Walter Harmsen. The way is now open for a safe retreat to the castle of Leers, but till he knows what has become of his friend and his former ward the major cannot think of doing this.

At length the day begins to break in the east, for which the major has been impatiently watching, in order to institute a thorough search for Harmsen and the others. He encounters Mr. Paedts and Dirk Broeks, who inform him that Walter Harmsen succeeded in bearing Antoine away from the wagon before it was captured by the enemy. He despatches soldiers in every direction, and the forest-echoes repeat the cries: "Walter Harmsen! Antoine Moreau!"

Suddenly there appear before the major and his victorious band, starting from some undergrowth at the side of the road, two men of whom it is apparent that they belong to the soldiery of nei-

ther the Inquisition nor the Hollanders. They are entirely unarmed and run breathlessly toward the major.

"Are you looking for Mr. Walter Harmsen?" says one of them, bowing low before the major. "Mr. Harmsen lies yonder under a twee, and Antoine Moweau is with him."

"We discovered them a little while ago," adds the other, whose arm is bound up in a bandage, "and, since we perceived that one of them was dying, we came hither to seek help."

"Show us the way," cried Major Gapertz; "but woe to you if you deceive us!"

The major called his men together, and, followed by the wagon, they proceeded in the direction pointed out by Brordus and Melchior. A sad spectacle was revealed as the light of day increased and they could look upon the results of the late struggle. Arms and extinguished torches littered the ground; everywhere lay the bodies of soldiers, both Flemings and Hollanders. Such of the latter as showed signs of life were lifted into the wagon, to be temporarily cared for at the castle and afterward transferred to a place of safety. Gladly would the major have performed similar acts of mercy for the wounded on the side of the enemy, but this was out of the question: he surmised that the Jesuits might at any moment despatch fresh troops from Tournay, in order both to regain possession

of the escaped prisoner and to capture his liberators.

A sad duty remained to the farmer's men. They had found the lifeless body of their master, and not far from it that, also, of Joris Ruikmans. They were about to place these upon the wagon, in order to bury them in the village cemetery, when information reached them that some of the hirelings of the Inquisition had set on fire the Hollander's house, and that house and barn and all had been destroyed. They judged it best, therefore, to conceal the bodies in the forest, and at a more convenient time to come and bury them where they lay.

CHAPTER XL.

TOGETHER IN DEATH.

MAJOR GAPERTZ and his men followed the whilom tools of the Jesuit, who conducted them for some distance along the highway and then into the depths of the forest. There, at the foot of a large tree, lay the unfortunate Antoine Moreau. Walter Harmsen, although himself exhibiting signs of utter exhaustion, was kneeling by Antoine's side, and at the moment that the major's company approached it was at once apparent to all that Walter was praying aloud. All instinctively bared the head, and several of the soldiers were so touched by the unexpected scene that they too sank upon their knees. Major Gapertz remained seated upon his horse, on account of his infirmity, but he bowed his head low upon the saddle.

When Walter rose, the friends and soldiers drew nearer, and it was but too evident that Antoine Moreau was dying. He stretched out his hands to Walter and said,

"I thank you for your brotherly love. The

Lord vouchsafes me a great blessing that I may die in your arms."

"In the arms of Jesus, beloved brother," Walter gently corrected him.

"Yes, in the arms of Jesus. He brings me into the kingdom of his glory, but you brought me to him, and to my last moment on earth you show me your love, in spite of my unfaithfulness. But Jesus is full of grace; oh, when shall I be with him? Then—"

"Then," continued Walter, seeing that the youth could not go on—"then shall you behold his glory and the glory prepared by God for you through his Son; then shall you dwell in that city with pearly gates and streets of gold. No tear shall trickle down your cheek, into your heart no sin shall enter, no enemy shall oppress you. Jesus shall be your everlasting joy and comfort. Jesus—"

"'Jesus'!" repeated the dying youth, raising his broken vision toward heaven. "Yes, Jesus! For him my soul yearns as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. Nothing ties me to this earth. My mother! I trust I shall meet her with Jesus. My sister! Ah! I know not how to reach her heart. The Lord forgive her what she has done to me. No, nothing binds me, for even you—I shall soon meet you in heaven. But thank these friends—these brave soldiers—for all they have risked on my behalf. My guardian, the major—how he has

battled ! Like a father for his son. May God reward him !”

Walter Harmsen motioned to his friend, and the major immediately alighted from his horse and with the aid of one of the soldiers came to the side of the dying Antoine and knelt there, taking the youth's hand in his own.

“This is the major himself, dear Antoine,” said Walter.

Antoine pressed the veteran's hand to his lips and repeated the words of gratitude which he had just spoken to Walter.

The major was deeply moved, and said,

“For what, dear boy, was it that I took you to my heart so many years ago ? Why should your life have been spared, when it has been filled with so much sorrow and misery in these years of your dawning manhood ?”

“Oh, speak not thus,” interrupted Antoine, quickly. “I do not repine ; I rejoice in these tribulations. They are the earnest of eternal life and peace. Praised be God that he counted me worthy to bear them ! Never have I regretted that you spared my life and saved me for this martyrdom.”

“The very words,” whispered Mr. Paedts, who with Walter was supporting the weak and enfeebled form of Antoine — “the very words you spoke the other night.”

"Yes, but I hoped then," responded Walter, "that it might not be a martyrdom unto death."

"My dear Antoine," answered the major, "you are now very near the crown of life; farewell till we meet before the Saviour's throne."

The major's voice was choked in tears.

We have not noticed much, if any, intercourse between the major and his former ward while he was a refugee in Leyden for his faith. During the few weeks that Walter Harmsen was absent on his journey Moreau had resolved to keep away from all the other persons who had been interested in his boyhood until the friend who had seen him as a young man could accompany him on the visits which should renew the acquaintance. Besides, the novel occupation to which he at once put his hand in the printing-office of Mr. Paedts taxed all his energies and gave him little leisure. When Walter returned, we have seen what happened—how the very next night Antoine hastened back to his destruction. But that the brave veteran cherished no ill-will against the youth for his seeming ingratitude or neglect has been amply shown by the heroic, self-devoted courage wherewith he fought in his behalf.

Motioning to Walter, the youth signified that he had more to say to him. Walter bent his ear close to the dying lips, and heard him say,

"I have one wish more."

“ ‘One wish’ ?” said Harmsen. “Can I satisfy it?”

Antoine Moreau shook his head.

“But at least tell me your wish, dear brother,” rejoined Walter. “Perhaps I can—”

“No, you cannot, my friend,” Antoine assured him, placing his clammy hand in Walter’s; “but Jesus can fulfill that wish. I have prayed much for him who has done me the greatest injury. Oh that he might learn to know the evil of what he thinks his greatest good! Could I but have seen him once more, I would—”

“Who is it?” asked Walter Harmsen, half guessing what the answer would be.

“Florentius Digo,” was the reply.

“ ‘Florentius Digo’ ?” repeated Walter. “Do you know where he is?”

Before the youth could reply the attention of the bystanders was directed to an entirely different object. A movement was heard within the covered wagon, about which none were thinking at present. When some turned to ascertain the cause, they saw, to their amazement, a man wrapped in a brown cloak, his forehead covered with blood, starting up from the bottom and looking wildly about him. Soon all eyes were upon him.

The soldiers who had accompanied the wagon and had sought to defend it against the party wishing to secure it for Florentius Digo’s benefit now

recognized the man who was carried on the litter, and called out,

“It is Florentius Digo, the wounded Jesuit.”

Walter Harmsen raised the head of Antoine a little higher, and, turning his eyes in the direction of the staggering form—for some one had assisted the wounded man to descend from the wagon—he said,

“There he is, yonder.”

“Where?” asked Antoine, eagerly; for his vision was fast failing.

“He is coming,” replied Walter.

At the request of Walter a few of the soldiers supported the tottering Jesuit and conducted him to Antoine’s side. The excessive loss of blood and the severe blows administered by Melchior had rendered the lithe and sinewy frame helplessly weak, and death seemed not far off. It was an impressive incident, this appearance of the Jesuit in the midst of the circle of Antoine Moreau’s friends and defenders at the moment when the youth was dying the death toward which the ghastly form conducted to his side had contributed so much. But Florentius saw nothing, nor heard: he was not conscious what was being done with him; and when he was set upon the ground, next to Antoine, he was not aware of the latter’s presence.

“Florentius Digo!” cried Walter Harmsen, with

trembling voice ; for he was deeply moved at sight of this man.

On hearing his name the Jesuit opened his eyes, but had not the strength to keep them open.

"Florentius Digo," began Walter, again, putting his mouth close to the Jesuit's ear, "at your side lies one who has made known the wish to see you once more. Do you know who he is?"

No answer.

"Florentius Digo !" said Antoine Moreau, gently.

At these words it seemed as if a convulsion had seized the Jesuit. He shook and trembled like a leaf, opened his eyes, and when he saw Antoine lying by his side uttered a feeble moan.

"Florentius Digo," repeated Antoine, "I thank the Lord that I have met you again before my death, for now I can assure you of my forgiveness for all that you have done to me. Here is my hand in token that I bear you no ill-will."

The dying youth stretched out his hand and sought to grasp that of the Jesuit. Walter Harmen took and guided his hand and laid the hand of the victim in that of the destroyer.

"Antoine Moreau," moaned the latter, "forgiveness !" He could say no more. He fell back in an apparent swoon, but ere long it was but too evident that it was death.

"Now I die in peace," said Antoine Moreau, grasping Walter's hand. "Oh what great joy



Together in Death.

possesses the soul that is in Jesus! See! yonder the light breaks upon my eyes! I hear songs of praise! Beautiful! Glorious!" In the light of the morning sun his face beamed with an expression of a heavenly joy.

"My dear Antoine," said Walter, "the Lord shall wipe away all tears; no suffering, no moaning, no crying, no trouble, will there be with Jesus—"

"No—oh no!" Antoine interrupted; "nothing but glory and light! I see the holy angels—a multitude—peoples—kings. Oh how unspeakable!" He let go Walter's hand, and, stretching both arms heavenward, he called, "Yea—I come—Lord Jesus!"

Antoine's head fell upon his breast; his lips still moved slightly, and then he entered upon eternity, to unite in the song of thanksgiving with all those who had been bought by the blood of the Lord.

But a few words will suffice in conclusion.

Loving and reverent hands buried the two bodies side by side and concealed all traces of the graves. The friends had need to be in haste, for the distant rolling of drums and other signs of military preparation warned them of the necessity for quitting these regions with all possible expedition. Disguised as before, the soldiers quickly

scattered, and pursued their journey to the borders of the republic by various routes.

Major Gapertz returned to his home in The Hague, where he died at a good old age. Mr. John Paedts and Dirk Broeks eventually reached Leyden, where the former laid posterity under obligations by many a valuable edition issued from his press.

Walter Harmsen did not accompany his friends to Holland: he journeyed into France to pay a visit to Baroness Jacoba von Vlooswyk. Arrived at her residence, he was received with the usual cordiality and Christian joy. But he was not permitted long to enjoy her society. Antoine's presentiment—if such it was—proved correct: he was to see his friend again soon. About a week after Walter's arrival he was attacked by a dangerous illness, and, although every means that science could suggest and wealth could command was employed to ward off the fatal termination, earthly affection could not prevent the heavenly Love from taking him away and conveying him to that city which hath foundations, of which God and the Lamb are the light, and where all the redeemed shine as suns in the kingdom of their Father.

THE END.

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